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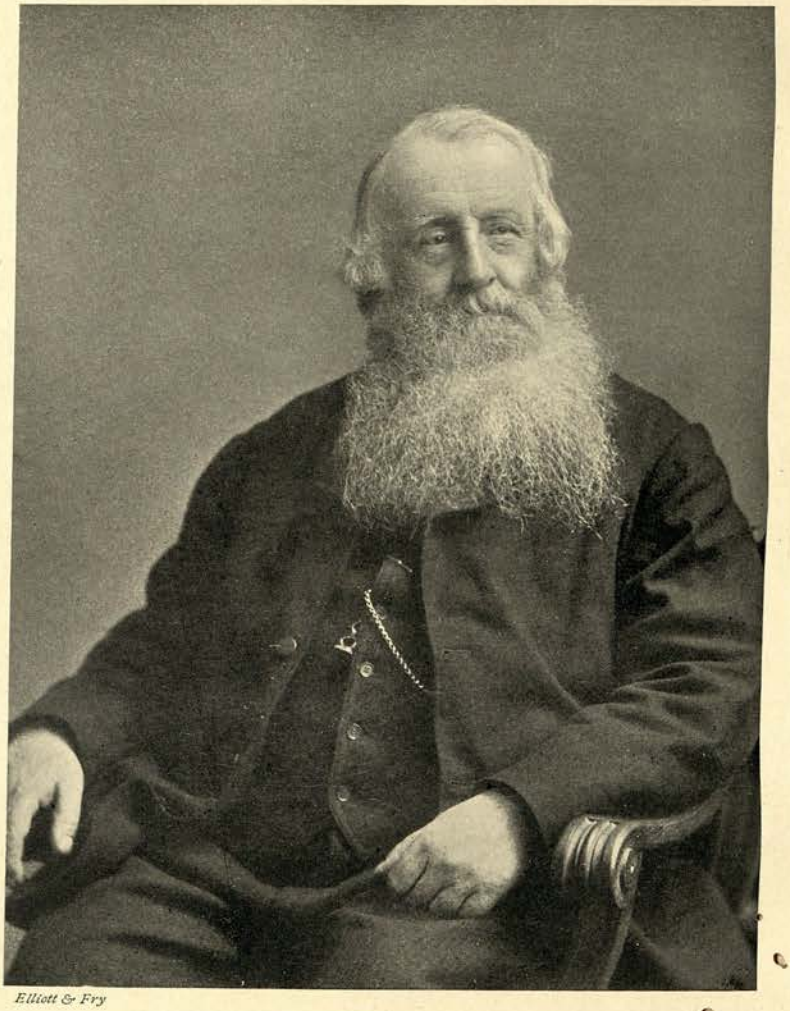
THE HISTORIANS' HISTORY OF THE WORLD



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EDWARD AUGUSTUS FREEMAN

THE HISTORIANS' HISTORY OF THE WORLD . . .

A COMPREHENSIVE NARRATIVE OF THE RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONS AS RECORDED BY THE GREAT WRITERS OF ALL AGES

EDITED BY HENRY SMITH WILLIAMS, LL.D.

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TOGETHER WITH AN ESTIMATE OF THE

REIGN OF HENRY III

BY

THOMAS F. TOUT

WITH ADDITIONAL CITATIONS FROM

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BOOK I

ENGLAND TO 1485

CHAPTER I

PRE-HISTORIC AND ROMAN BRITAIN

[TO 449 A.D.]

Skulls are harder than consonants, and races lurk when languages slink away.—RHYS.[a]

THE PRE-CELTIC INHABITANTS

THE history of Great Britain may be said to begin with the landing of Cæsar's legions on the southern shore of England, but the researches of modern scholars have enabled us to obtain reasonably certain information about the peoples who inhabited the islands prior to the coming of the Romans. Ages ago, when England and Ireland were not islands but were attached to the European continent, they were inhabited by a race of stunted savages, whom we know as the Palæolithic men of the river-drift. These men who lived in caves, who did not cultivate the soil, and who used stone implements of the rudest construction, had no continuity, as far as can be traced, with any people or tribe now extant. Ages passed, the climate of the country became milder, and the land which constitutes the present kingdom of Great Britain took on its existing insular form. With this change in the configuration of the region appeared a new race, the Neolithic men. They, like the Palæolithic men, used stone implements, but of a much more perfect make. They possessed flocks of domestic animals, and wore garments made from cloth which they wove from thread of their own spinning. They were probably the builders of the great mounds and cromlechs found in England to-day, and as we know from their scattered tombs must have occupied the greater part of Britain. They were short but well-built men, with black hair and dark complexions. From the striking similarity in physical characteristics they are commonly supposed to have an affinity with the Iberian race which at one time occupied a greater part of western Europe. In many of the less settled regions of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, are still found short, black-haired people whose origin was undoubtedly non-Aryan and pre-Celtic, and who are thought to be the descendants of the Neolithic inhabitants of the

islands. The evidence of the burial-mounds seems to prove that Neolithic England was later—just how much later no one knows—invaded and partially subdued by a race of tall, round-headed men of the fair, Finnish type. They probably intermarried and settled peaceably with the Neolithic tribes in many parts of England, and when overwhelmed and absorbed by the first wave of the Celtic invaders, had apparently obtained a considerable degree of civilisation. No less an authority than Professor Huxley,[d] however, declares his disbelief in the infusion of this latter Finn-like element into Britain, and is satisfied that before the coming of the Celts the only race in the islands was that resembling the dark Iberians of the south.

THE COMING OF THE CELTS

Rhys[e] has investigated the obscure subject of the Celtic invasion, and gives us perhaps as clear a picture of it as present knowledge suffices to present. He points out that the Celtic invasion must not be understood as the matter of a year or a century. Doubtless it extended over many generations, being rather in the nature of an immigration than a hostile invasion. Moreover, there would seem to have been two quite distinct periods, separated perhaps by centuries, during which different branches of the Celtic race made their way to England. The ethnic divisions of the Celtic family are held to be only two in number, each having characteristic linguistic features, traces of which have been preserved in the speech of their descendants. The first Celtic invaders of Britain were the ancestors of the people who now speak Gaelic in Ireland, the Isle of Man, and the Highlands of the north; they were to be traced also in Wales and Devon as late as the sixth century, possibly later. The Celts of this first group are believed always to have applied to themselves the name Goidhel, which modern English usage has corrupted into Gael, but which was formerly written Goidel. Rhys, to avoid ambiguity, prefers to speak of this group as Goidels.

The second group of invading Celts, who, as has just been pointed out, probably came much later than their Goidelic cousins, have their present-day representatives, both ethnically and as to speech, in the people of Wales and the Bretons; "formerly," says Rhys,[e] "one might have added the Welsh of Cumbria, and till the last century some of those of Cornwall." These later invaders bore the familiar name of Briton, which Rhys prefers to retain in its Welsh form *Brython* for purposes of exact reference. It is held that in the time of the Roman conquest the language of these later Gauls who remained south of the Forth differed but little from that of the Gauls of the Continent. Gradually, of course, the language of this isolated group changed,—human speech being here, as always, the most mobile and flexible of mediums,—and there was also on the north and west a mingling of the two Celtic families, with resulting compounds both of words and of ethnic types. Rhys thinks that the Brythons may virtually be regarded as Gauls come to settle in Britain. He declares that "every Celt of the United Kingdom is, so far as language is concerned, either a Goidel or a Brython."

Attempts to reconstruct the history of this early period must give but very vague and doubtful results; yet it seems clear, on the testimony of language and of archæological remains, that the Goidelic branch of Celts came long before their cousins, their branch coming prominently into contact with the aboriginal inhabitants of Britain, and that its members were profoundly altered, both as to ethnic qualities and as to language and customs, by such contact. On the other hand, by the time the Brythons came the aboriginal

[55 B.C.]

race had been blended with the earlier Celts, and the new-comers were thus placed in contact with a people having a civilisation more closely comparable to their own. The changes, therefore, must have been relatively great in the case of the Goidels, while the Brythons remained to a large extent unmodified by external ethnic influences. In this supposed fact Rhys finds an explanation of much of the difference of speech between the Welsh and the Irish. But it must be understood that there is much that is merely conjectural in such inferences as these. Anthropologists are agreed, however, that study of the remains of skulls and of the physique and complexion of the existing inhabitants of the United Kingdom demonstrates a mingling of races; and it is held that the non-Aryan race or races who were here before the coming of the Celts impressed their physical traits so potently that they may be traced in certain individuals of our own day.[a]

BRITAIN BEFORE THE ROMAN CONQUEST

The population of the whole island of Britain comprised at the time of Cæsar's invasions above forty tribes. The long tract of land to the south of the Severn and the Thames was unequally portioned among ten nations, of which the principal were the Cantii, or men of Kent; the Belgæ, or inhabitants of the present counties of Hampshire and Wilts; and the Damnonii, who, from the river Exe, had gradually extended themselves to the western promontory. Across the arm of the sea, now called the Bristol Channel, the most powerful was the tribe of the Silures. From the banks of the Wye, their original seat, they had carried their arms to the Dee and the ocean; and their authority was acknowledged by the Ordovices and the Dimetæ, the inhabitants of the northern mountains, and of the western district of Wales. On the eastern coast of the island, between the Thames and the Stour, lay the Trinobantes, whose capital was London; and from the Stour to the Humber stretched the two kindred nations of the Iceni, called Cenimagni and Coitanni. The Duboni and Catuvellauni, confederate tribes under the rule of Cassivellaunus, extended along the left bank of the Thames, from the Severn to the Trinobantes; and above them dwelt the Cornavii and several clans of minor consequence. The Brigantes were the most powerful of all the British nations. They were bounded by the Humber on the south, and by the Tyne on the north; and had subdued the Volantii and Sistuntii of the western coast. To the north of the Brigantes were five tribes, known by the general appellation of Maætæ: and beyond these wandered amid the lakes and mountains various clans, among the most warlike of which were the Caledonians.[b]

Manners and Customs of the Britons

We do not get a very high idea of the manners and customs of Celtic Britain from the writings of Cæsar,[c] and it is very likely that in many cases his information and inferences were erroneous. The domestic life of the Britains was primitive. Their dwellings were mere circular wigwams, generally without foundations. Both sexes tattooed their bodies with woad. The weight of recent evidence seems to incline to the belief that polyandry, in parts of the island at least, was a common practice, but Cæsar's picture of brothers, or fathers and sons possessing their wives in common seems to have little authority. The joint family, under the general rule or direction of an elective head, probably in most cases the oldest male member of the house,

was apparently the social and political unit. By the family, which often was large enough to take on the character of a petty tribe, the fields were cultivated in common. Between the various family groups existed a definite and generally recognised system of fines as compensation for injuries, but there was no central authority to compel their acceptance, and redress in the last resort was to force of arms. Various influences, of which military conquest was probably the principal one, had gradually brought about a general union of the families and smaller tribes, into larger but loosely organised political bodies. These larger tribes were continually torn by internal feuds and by almost constant warfare with their neighbours. Between them there seemed to be an entire absence of race feeling. The insular position which had secured them from the constant outside pressure to which the continental peoples were subject had also removed the most powerful influence which might have made for unity of action against a common foe. "There is not," says Tacitus,[h] "a more fortunate circumstance than that these powerful nations make not one common cause. They fight separately and unsupported; and each in its turn is compelled to bow beneath the Roman yoke."

Each tribe was ruled by a chieftain or king, who appears to have been partly elective and partly hereditary. There were grades and ranks of kings apparently, but the actual authority of even the greatest was small, and deposition of rulers was common. Kingship seems not to have been based on dynastic succession, but to have belonged rather to some dominant or powerful family. Among the members of each tribe there were minute social grades and distinctions, differing materially in different parts of the island, and we hear of free tenants, of bond tenants, and of dependants who were probably little above the grade of slaves. Exactly what the system of land-holding among them was it is impossible to determine, but while cultivation in common was the rule, some lands were very likely owned by individuals and not by families.

The civil bond among the Britons as among the continental Celts was not strong, and the tribal meeting had through neglect come to have little political importance. Of this tendency Merivale[y] says: "To the retention of loss of this essential element of an automatous tribe-community the difference of the fortunes of the Celtic and Teutonic races is mainly referable." With this entire absence of a legislative body, we find also the lack of a system of judicature and of any power corresponding to that of police. It is to the institution of Druidism that we must look for the agency which supplied so many of the organs or instruments of government which the Britons apparently lacked.[a]

DRUIDISM

The religion of the Britons was that of the druids, whether it had been brought by them from Gaul, as is the more natural supposition, or, as Cæsar asserts, had been invented in the island [is still a matter of controversy]. The druids worshipped, under different appellations, the same gods as the Greeks and Romans.

[The ancient writers tell us very little about the deities and religious beliefs of the Britons, but they probably did not differ in any great particular from those of the Gauls, of which we possess considerable knowledge.] To the superior gods, they added, like other polytheists, a multitude of local deities, the genii of the woods, rivers, and mountains. Some writers have held that they rejected the use of temples through a sublime notion of the Divine immensity: perhaps the absence of such structures may, with more prob-

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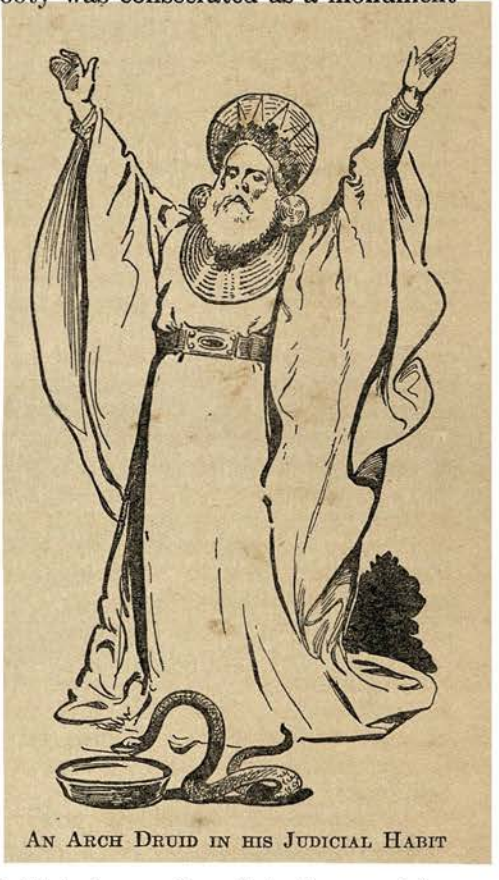
ability, be referred to their want of architectural skill. On the oak they looked with peculiar reverence. This monarch of the forest, from its strength and durability, was considered as the most appropriate emblem of the Divinity. The tree and its productions were deemed holy; to its trunk was bound the victim destined for slaughter; and of its leaves were formed the chaplets worn at the time of sacrifice. If it chanced to produce the mistletoe, the whole tribe was summoned: two white heifers were immolated under its branches; the principal druid cut the sacred plant with a knife of gold; and a religious feast terminated the ceremonies of the day.

The druids were accustomed to dwell at a distance from the profane, in huts or caverns, amid the silence and gloom of the forest. There, at the hours of noon or midnight, when the Deity was supposed to honour the sacred spot with his presence, the trembling votary was admitted within a circle of lofty oaks, to prefer his prayer, and listen to the responses of the minister. In peace they offered the fruits of the earth: in war they devoted to the god of battles the spoils of the enemy. The cattle were slaughtered in his honour, and a pile formed of the rest of the booty was consecrated as a monument of his powerful assistance. But in the hour of danger or distress human sacrifices were deemed the most efficacious. Impelled by a superstition, which steeled all the feelings of humanity, the officiating priest plunged his dagger into the breast of his victim, whether captive or malefactor; and from the rapidity with which the blood issued from the wound, and the convulsions in which the sufferer expired, announced the future happiness or calamity of his country.



AN ARCH DRUID IN HIS JUDICIAL HABIT

To the veneration which the British druids derived from their sacerdotal character, must be added the respect which the reputation of knowledge never fails to extort from the ignorant. They professed to be the depositaries of a mysterious science, far above the comprehension of the vulgar: and their schools were opened to none but the sons of illustrious families. Such was their fame, that the druids of Gaul, to attain the perfection of the institute [crossed to Britain] to study under their British brethren. With them, as with similar orders of priests among the ancients, a long course of preparatory discipline was required: and we are told that many had the patience to spend no less than twenty years in this state of probation. The initiated were bound to the most inviolable secrecy; and, that the profane might be kept in ignorance of their doctrines, the use of letters was prohibited, and each precept was delivered in verse by the teacher, and committed to memory by the disciple.

Of tenets thus anxiously concealed, it is not to be expected that much should be distinctly known: the following particulars have been collected from the few notices contained in the ancient historians, compared with the doctrines peculiar to the bards. The druids professed to be acquainted with the nature, the power, and the providence of the Divinity; with the figure, size, formation, and final destruction of the earth; with the stars, their position and motions, and their supposed influence over human affairs. They practised the art of divination. Three of their ancient astrologers were able, it is said, to foretell whatever should happen before the day of doom; and their skill in magic was so great, that, according to Pliny,[u] the Persians themselves might be thought to be their disciples. To medicine also they had pretensions: but their knowledge was principally confined to the use of the mistletoe, vervain, savin, and trefoil; and even the efficacy of these simples was attributed not to the nature of the plants, but to the influence of prayers and incantations. The great objects of the order were, according to themselves, "to reform morals, to secure peace, and to encourage goodness:" and the following lesson, which they inculcated to the people, was certainly conducive to those ends: "The three first principles of wisdom are, obedience to the laws of God, concern for the good of man, and fortitude under the accidents of life." They also taught the immortality of the human soul; but to this dogma they added the absurd fiction of metempsychosis. It was to this doctrine that the Romans attributed that contempt of death which was so conspicuous in the Celtic nations. The druids acquired and exercised the most absolute dominion over the minds of their countrymen. In public and private deliberations of any moment, their opinion was always asked, and was generally obeyed. By their authority peace was preserved; in their presence passion and revenge were silenced: and at their mandate contending armies consented to sheath their swords. Civil controversies were submitted to their decision; and the punishment of crimes was reserved to their justice. Religion supplied them with the power of enforcing submission. Disobedience was followed by excommunication: and from that instant the culprit was banished from their sacrifices, cut off from the protection of the laws, and stigmatised as a disgrace to his family and country. As the druids delivered their instructions in verse, they must have had some notion of poetry, and we find among them a particular class distinguished by the title of bards. The bard was a musician as well as a poet: and he constantly accompanied his voice with his harp. Every chieftain retained one or more of them in his service, who attended him in his hall; eulogised his bounty and his valour; and sang the praises and the history of their country. He accompanied the chief and his clan to the field of battle; to the sound of his harp they marched against the enemy; and in the heat of the contest animated themselves with the hope that their actions would be renowned in song, and transmitted to the admiration of their posterity.[b]

EARLY VISITORS TO BRITAIN

It is not until about the middle of the fourth century before Christ—in the age of Alexander the Great—that the Greek world acquired its first actual knowledge of the existence of the islands of Britain and Ireland. Adventurous Carthaginian mariners had long before this passed out through the Pillars of Hercules and established a trade in tin not only with Spain and Gaul, but with the Cassiterides,[1] the islands off the northwestern coast of the

[1 There has been considerable discussion in regard to the identification of the Cassiterides, but the view here expressed is now the generally accepted one. Elton[g] and Rhys,[e] two of

[*ca.* 350-B.C.]

Spanish peninsula, which Herodotus,[s] writing in the fifth century B.C., already knew as "the tin islands from whence our tin comes." It is quite likely that some of these southern adventurers visited Britain, but we have no authentic record of such voyages, and the belief of some later Roman writers that the Carthaginians worked tin mines in Britain must be considered unfounded. It was some time in the fourth century that one of the Scipios of Rome visited the Greek colonies of Marseilles (Massilia) and Narbonne (Narbo Martius) to see if trade could not be established with the region beyond southern Gaul in order to compete with the Carthaginians. Nothing was apparently done to start such an undertaking at that time. The idea, however, had evidently taken hold of the merchants of Marseilles, whether it was suggested by the Roman or not, and some time about the middle of the same century—we do not know the exact date—an expedition was fitted out in that city, and placed in command of Pytheas, a Greek mathematician and astronomer of eminence, whose travels and discoveries have won for him the title of "the Humboldt of Antiquity."

Pytheas and his fellow-discoverers, taking ship at Marseilles, sailed around Spain and thence up the Gallic coast to Brittany. Crossing to the Kentish shore he skirted the southern and eastern shore of Britain as far as the Thames. From there he crossed the North Sea to the mouth of the Rhine, rounded Jutland and proceeded as far apparently as the mouth of the Vistula. Thence coasting the shores of Norway to the Arctic Circle, he recrossed the North Sea to the Shetlands and northern Scotland, again traversed the British coast to Brittany, and leaving his ship at the mouth of the Garonne travelled overland across Gaul to Marseilles. The fragmentary character of the writings of Pytheas which have come down to us have thrown some doubt on his voyage from Britain to the East, but his relation of what he saw in Britain was so circumstantially correct as to lead to its general acceptance by recent writers. It is not probable that he visited Ireland, the very existence of which was apparently unknown to him.

Pytheas reached Britain in the early summer and noted the luxurious wheat-fields. It interested him to see that the farmers gathered the sheaves into great barns for threshing. The cloudy, foggy weather of Britain made it impossible to thresh on roofless threshing floors, such as were used in the sunny Mediterranean countries. He told also of a drink made of wheat and honey—the mead or metheglin of modern times—and he is probably also the earliest authority for a description of British beer—the *cuirm* of the Irish, and *cwrw* of the Welsh. In the fragments of his writings which remain we find no mention of an established tin trade with the Continent, nor, indeed, any mention of tin at all. But Elton, who has devoted the most careful research to this point, thinks that he undoubtedly learned something about the production of tin, which was apparently the chief object of the voyage. "He was probably," concludes Elton,[g] "the originator of that commerce in the metal which was established soon after this time on the route between Marseilles and the Straits of Dover." Most of the ancient British coins, the earliest of which are supposed to date from about 200 B.C., are modelled on Greek money current in Marseilles in the lifetime of Pytheas. This would seem to point to the fact that by that date (*circa* 200 B.C.), at any rate, a

the foremost authorities on the early history of Britain, agree in this conclusion. Ramsay[k] says: "They have sometimes, on the authority of Festus Avienus,[t] a writer of the fourth century of our era, been identified with the Scilly Islands on the Cornish coast. But the older authorities—Posidonius (born *circa* 135 B.C.), as quoted by Strabo,[q] Diodorus Siculus[r] (*floruit* 50 B.C.), and Pliny[u] (died 79 A.D.)—distinctly connect the tin islands with the coast of the Iberian peninsula."]

[*ca.* 250 B.C.]

regular trade had become well established and the commercial ideas and methods of Southern Europe generally adopted.

Pytheas returned to Marseilles, and there published an account of his voyages. It was probably in the form of a diary recording his observations and progress as he journeyed from place to place. The work itself has been lost, and all we possess of it consists of passages quoted by later writers. Upon his discoveries were subsequently based so many romances and volumes of imaginary travel, with which his narrative became confused in the public mind, that he was for some time discredited, but the real value of his contributions to the history of civilisation has been duly recognised in modern times.

Pytheas, we have said, apparently knew nothing of the existence of Ireland, nor indeed have we any knowledge of the identity of the first voyager to see its shores, yet it could not have remained long unknown once communication with Britain was established. The earliest mention of it, however, is found in an anonymous Greek treatise known as the *Book of the World*,[x] long erroneously attributed to Aristotle, but now generally supposed to have been written as late as 250 B.C.—seventy years or more after his death. Here, too, we find the form of the later names "Britain" and "Albion." "In the Ocean," reads the passage, "are two islands of great size, Albion and Ierne, called the Bretannic Isles, lying beyond the Celti."

EARLY BRITON MERCHANT

About two centuries after the visit of Pytheas, another distinguished Greek, the geographer Posidonius the Stoic, under whom Cicero studied at Rhodes, journeyed extensively throughout northern and north-western Europe, and crossed the English Channel to Cornwall, which he called "Belerion" or "Belerium." His writings, like those of Pytheas, have been lost in the original, but several passages of length have been preserved in the works of Diodorus Siculus,[y] who wrote in the second half of the first century before Christ. In these extracts Posidonius gives us an interesting picture of Celtic Britain, whose inhabitants from frequent intercourse with Gallic merchants, he tells us, had obtained a considerable degree of civilisation. He describes the methods employed in mining and smelting the tin, which was not found on the surface, but had to be dug from the rocky earth. Like Pytheas, Posidonius tells us his observations of the harvesting of the Britons, which from the greater primitiveness of the methods employed would seem to have applied to an inland region more remote from the Kentish coast of which his predecessor evidently wrote.

Intercourse with the nations to the southward, at any rate, taught the Britons many of the arts of civilisation. Their mines were worked to greater advantage, and the tin export became large. The natives cast their tin

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into square blocks and conveyed it to some common place of deposit on the southern coast, erroneously supposed by many early writers to have been the Isle of Wight. Thence it was carried by Gallic traders to the mouths of the Seine, the Loire or the Garonne, and by river-routes and pack-horses to Narbonne or Marseilles. Strabo[q] is authority for the statement that from the Mediterranean ports it was conveyed by traders to India and the far East.[a] In return for this metal, so highly prized by the ancient nations, the Britons received articles of inferior value to the importers, but of high estimation to an uncivilised people; salt for the preservation of provisions, earthenware for domestic use, and brass for the manufacture of arms and ornaments.

The enterprise of the foreigners quickened the industry of the natives. Tin had originally formed the sole article of their commerce; to the exportation of tin was soon added that of hides, which were procured in immense numbers from the tribes in the interior; lead was next extracted from veins open to the day; and then followed a most valuable acquisition, the discovery and use of iron. But report had exaggerated the productions of the country far beyond their real value: and at the time of the invasion, the Romans flattered themselves with the hope of conquering an island of which the shores abounded with pearls, and the soil with ores of the more precious metals. Their avarice was, however, defeated. Of gold or silver not the smallest trace was discovered; nor were the British pearls of a size or colour which could reward the labour of the collector. Yet the invasion produced one advantage to the natives. They sought and at last discovered ores of the very metals after which Roman avarice had so anxiously but fruitlessly inquired: and the British exports, at the commencement of the Christian era, comprised, if we may credit Tacitus, corn and cattle, gold and silver, tin, lead and iron, skins, slaves, and dogs.

CÆSAR'S INVASIONS OF BRITAIN

It is to the pen of a Roman general that we are indebted for our first acquaintance with the history of Britain. Julius Cæsar, in the short space of three years, had conducted his victorious legions from the foot of the Alps to the mouth of the Rhine. From the coast of the Morini he could descry the white cliffs of the neighbouring island: and the conqueror of Gaul aspired to the glory of adding Britain to the dominions of Rome. The inability or refusal of the Gallic mariners to acquaint him with the number of the inhabitants, their manner of warfare, and their political institutions; and the prudence or timidity of Volusenus, who had been sent to procure information, but returned without venturing to communicate with the natives, served only to irritate his curiosity and to inflame his ambition. The Britons, by lending aid to his enemies, the Veneti, supplied him with a decent pretext for hostilities; and on the 26th of August, in the fifty-fifth year before the Christian era, Cæsar sailed from Calais, with the infantry of two legions. To cross the strait was only the work of a few hours: but, when he saw the opposite heights crowned with multitudes of armed men, he altered his course, and steering along the shore, cast anchor before the spot which is now occupied by the town of Deal. The natives carefully followed the motions of the fleet, urging their horses into the waves, and, by their gestures and shouts, bidding defiance to the invaders. The appearance of the naked barbarians, and a superstitious fear of offending the gods of this unknown world, spread a temporary alarm

among the Romans: but after a short pause, the standard-bearer of the tenth legion, calling on his comrades to follow him, leaped with his eagle into the sea; detachments instantly poured from the nearest boats; the beach, after a short struggle, was gained; and the untaught valour of the natives yielded to the arms and the discipline of their enemies.

If the Romans were pre-eminent in the art of war, they were greatly deficient in nautical science. On the fourth night after their arrival, the violence of the wind augmented the usual swell of the waves at a spring-tide; the ships that had been hauled on shore were filled with water, those which rode at anchor were driven out to sea; and a squadron, employed to bring the cavalry from Gaul, was entirely dispersed. The British chieftains, who had come to the camp to solicit peace, observed the consternation excited by these untoward events; and, having retired separately under different pretexts, concealed themselves, with their forces, in the neighbouring woods. Cæsar was not aware of their design, till he heard that the seventh legion, which had been sent out to forage, was surrounded and overwhelmed by a hostile multitude. The timely arrival of the rest of the army rescued the survivors from utter destruction: but the Britons, steady in their plan, despatched messengers to the neighbouring tribes, to represent the small number of the invaders, and inculcate the necessity of intimidating future adventurers by exterminating the present. A general assault was soon made on the Roman camp; and, although it proved unsuccessful, it taught Cæsar to reflect on the evident danger of his situation, if the inclemency of the weather should interrupt his communication with Gaul, and confine him, during the winter, to a foreign shore, without supplies of provisions. To save his reputation, he gladly accepted an illusory promise of submission from a few of the natives, and hastened back with his army to Gaul, after a short absence of three weeks. It is manifest that he had little reason to boast of the success of this expedition; and on that account he affects in his *Commentaries* to represent it as undertaken for the sole purpose of discovery. But at Rome it was hailed as the forerunner of the most splendid victories; the mere invasion of Britain was magnified into the conquest of a new world; and a thanksgiving of twenty days was decreed by the senate to the immortal gods.

The ensuing winter was spent by each party in the most active preparations. In spring the Roman army, consisting of five legions and two thousand cavalry, sailed from the coast of Gaul in a fleet of more than eight hundred ships. At the sight of this immense armament stretching across the channel, the Britons retired with precipitation to the woods; and the invaders landed without opposition on the very same spot which they had occupied the preceding year. Cæsar immediately marched in pursuit of the natives, but was recalled the next day by news of the disaster which had befallen his fleet. A storm had risen in the night, in which forty vessels were totally lost, and many others driven on shore. To guard against similar accidents, he ordered the remainder to be dragged above the reach of the tide, and to be surrounded with a fortification of earth. In this laborious task ten days were employed, after which the invaders resumed their march towards the interior of the country. Each day was marked by some partial rencounter, in which the natives appear to have frequently obtained the advantage. It was their policy to shun a general engagement. Divided into small bodies, but stationed within hail of each other, they watched the march of the enemy, cut off the stragglers, and diligently improved every opportunity of annoyance. Their principal warriors, who fought from chariots, extorted by their skill and intrepidity the applause of the Romans. On the most rapid descent, or the very brink

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of a precipice, they guided their vehicles with as much safety as on the level plain. No danger appalled them. They drove fearlessly along the Roman line, espied every opportunity of breaking the ranks of the enemy, and during the heat of the action would run along the pole, leap on the ground, or regain their seats, as the events of the moment seemed to demand. If they despaired of success, they retired with rapidity; if they were pursued, they abandoned their chariots, and with their pikes resisted on foot the charge of the cavalry. It required all the art of Cæsar to inflict any serious injury on so active a foe. At length three of the legions with all the cavalry were sent out to forage, and their apparent disorder invited the Britons to attack them with their whole force. Descending from the hills, they poured through every opening, and penetrated as far as the eagles: but the veterans received them with coolness; the cavalry pursued them in their flight, and few were able to regain the mountains and woods. Dispirited by this check, many of the confederate tribes retired to their homes; and Cassivellaunus (Cassibelan), king of the Catuvellauni (Cassi), the chief of the allies, was left to support the whole pressure of the war.

By repeated victories over his neighbours, Cassivellaunus had acquired high renown among the natives. The tribes on the right bank of the Thames had invited him to place himself at their head; and his conduct during the war seems to have justified the selection. Deserted by his confederates, he retreated into his own territories, that he might place the Thames between himself and his pursuers. At the only ford he ordered sharp stakes to be fixed in the bed of the river; lined the left bank with palisades; and stationed behind these the principal part of his army. But the advance of the Romans was not to be retarded by artificial difficulties. The cavalry, without hesitation, plunged into the river; the infantry followed, though the water reached to their shoulders; and the Britons, intimidated by the intrepid aspect of the invaders, fled to the woods. Such is the account of this transaction which has been given by Cæsar: but Polyænus[v] attributes his success to the panic caused by the sight of an elephant. At the approach of this unknown animal of enormous magnitude, covered with scales of polished steel, and carrying on his back a turret filled with armed men, the Britons abandoned their defences, and sought for safety by a precipitate flight.

The king of the Catuvellauni was not, however, discouraged. To impede the progress of the enemy, he laid waste his own territories. By his orders the habitations were burnt, the cattle driven away, and the provisions destroyed, and, as the Romans marched through this desert, Cassivellaunus himself, with four thousand chariots, carefully watched all their motions. But the unfortunate chieftain had to contend, not only with the foreign enemy, but also with the jealousy and resentment of his own countrymen. He had formerly subdued the Trinobantes, a contiguous nation. In the contest, their king Immanuentius had been slain; and his son Mandubratius was now an exile, serving in the army of the invaders. The Trinobantes offered to submit to the Romans, on condition that they should be governed by the son of Immanuentius; and several tribes, which bore with impatience the yoke of the Catuvellauni, following their example, solicited the protection of Cæsar. By these he was conducted to the capital or principal fortress of Cassivellaunus, situated on the spot where afterwards Verulam was built, and near to the present town of St. Albans. It was surrounded with a rampart and ditch, and covered on every side by extensive marshes and forests. Even Cæsar admired the judgment with which the position had been selected, and the art with which it was fortified. Its defences, however, were easily

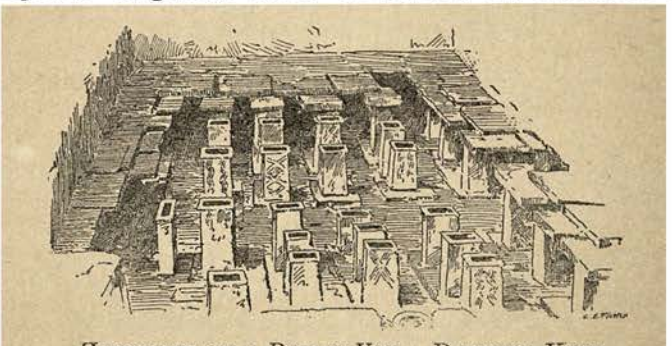
forced by the Romans; and the cattle of Cassivellaunus, his principal treasure, became the prey of the conquerors.

The British king still waited the issue of his plans in another quarter. He had instructed the four chieftains of Kent to assemble their forces, assault the Roman camp, and set fire to the ships. If this attempt had succeeded, the Romans would have been involved in inextricable difficulties. But the men of Kent were defeated; and Cassivellaunus condescended to sue for peace. Cæsar, who feared the approach of the equinox, willingly prescribed the following conditions: that he should give hostages, should live in amity with the Trinobantes, and should furnish his share to the annual tribute which was to be imposed on Britain. The Romans immediately marched back to the coast; the fleet had already been refitted, and Cæsar returned to Gaul in the month of September.

Such were the petty results of this mighty expedition. The citizens of Rome celebrated with joy the victories of their favourite general: but the conqueror of Britain was not master of one foot of British ground.

THE CONQUESTS OF CLAUDIUS AND HIS SUCCESSORS

From the time of Cæsar to the reign of Claudius, during the lapse of ninety-seven years, the Britons retained their independence. During the civil wars, the attention of the Romans was too actively employed at home to think of foreign conquest. Augustus thrice announced his intention of annexing



HYPOCAUST OF A ROMAN VILLA, DARENTH, KENT

Britain to the empire: but the danger was averted, on one occasion by a submissive embassy from the natives, on the others by the intervention of more important concerns. Instead of exacting the tribute imposed by Cæsar, he contented himself with levying duties on the trade between Gaul and Britain, a measure which brought a larger sum into the imperial treasury, and was borne without murmuring by the inhabitants. Yet this financial experiment has been magnified, by the flattery of the poet Horace, into the conquest of the whole island.

Tiberius pretended that the empire was already too extensive; and sought to justify his own indolence by the policy of Augustus. His nephew and successor, Caligula, exhibited to the world a farce, worthy of the childish prince by whom it was planned. Cunobelin (Cymbeline), the most powerful of the successors of Cassivellaunus, had banished his son, Adminius. The exile repaired to the emperor, and, as if Britain had been his patrimony, made a surrender of the island into the hands of Caligula. The glorious in-

[41-50 A.D.]

telligence was immediately transmitted to the senate: and the army, raised for the war against the Germans, was ordered to assemble on the coast of Boulogne (Gesoriacum). As soon as the emperor arrived, he arrayed the legions on the shore, rowed out to sea in the imperial galley, returned precipitately, and gave the signal of battle. The soldiers, in suspense and astonishment, inquired for the enemy, but Caligula informed them that they had that day conquered the ocean, and commanded them to collect its spoils, the shells on the beach, as a proof of their victory. To perpetuate the memory of his folly, he laid the foundation of a lofty beacon, and returned to Rome to give himself the honours of a triumph.[1]

But the empty pageantry of Caligula was soon succeeded by the real horrors of invasion. Instigated by Beric, a British chieftain, whom domestic feuds had expelled from his native country, the emperor Claudius commanded Aulus Plautius to transport four legions with their auxiliaries into Britain. The Britons, under the command of Caractacus (Caradoc) and Togidumnus, the two sons of Cunobelin, adopted the policy of their ancestors, and endeavoured to harass, rather than to repel, the invaders. But the German auxiliaries, better fitted for such warfare than the legionary soldiers, followed them across rivers and morasses: and though the natives made a gallant resistance, drove them, with the loss of Togidumnus, to the northern bank of the Thames. The emperor himself now took the command, penetrated to Colchester (Camalodunum), and received the submission of the Britons in the vicinity. At his departure he divided the Roman forces between the legate Plautius, and Vespasian, an officer whose merit afterwards invested him with the purple. To the care of Plautius was assigned the left, to that of Vespasian the right, bank of the Thames. Both experienced from the natives the most determined resistance. Vespasian fought no less than thirty battles before he could subdue the Belgæ and the natives of the Isle of Wight; Plautius, during the five remaining years of his government, was opposed by Caractacus at the head of the Catuvellauni and Silures, who, though frequently beaten, as often renewed the contest.

Ostorius Scapula was the successor of Plautius. To repress the inroads of the unsubdued Britons he erected two chains of forts, one in the north along the river Avon, the other in the west along the left bank of the Severn. The reduced tribes were gradually moulded into the form of a Roman province: and, when the Iceni dared to revolt, their rebellion was severely punished, and a colony of veterans was planted at Camalodunum to insure their obedience. The enthusiastic attachment of the Silures to their independence and their hatred of the Roman name has been envenomed by an incautious expression of Ostorius, that their existence as a people was incompatible with his projects. In Shropshire, at the confluence of the Clun and Teme, stands a lofty hill called Caer-Caradoc. There Caractacus and the Silures determined to defend the liberty of their country. The bank of the river was lined with troops, and the ascent of the hill was fortified with ramparts of loose stones. At the approach of the Romans, the Britons bound themselves by an oath to conquer or die. Ostorius himself hesitated, but at the demand of the legions, the signal of battle was given, the passage of the river was forced, and the Romans, under showers of darts, mounted the hill, burst over the ramparts, and drove the Silures from the summit. The wife and daughter

[1 Thiers *w* in his *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire*, Book XX, tells of a festival arranged by Napoleon in August, 1804, on the seashore near Boulogne, where he had gathered an army for his proposed conquest of England. The story is interesting to read in connection with that of Caligula.]

of Caractacus fell into the hands of the victors, his brothers soon after surrendered, and the king himself was delivered in chains to Ostorius by his step-mother, Cartismandua, queen of the Brigantes, under whose protection he had hoped to elude the vigilance of his pursuers.

The fame of Caractacus had already crossed the seas; and the natives of Italy were anxious to behold the man who had braved for nine years the power of Rome. As he passed through the imperial city, he expressed his surprise that men who possessed such palaces at home should deem it worth their while to fight for the wretched hovels of Britain. Claudius, to his own honour, received him graciously, restored him to liberty, and, if we may credit Tacitus, invested him with princely authority over a portion of conquered Britain. The event was celebrated at Rome with extraordinary joy.

The Silures, taught by experience that uninstructed valour was not a match for the discipline and defensive armour of the legions, adopted a more desultory but sanguinary mode of warfare, and contented themselves with harassing the Romans in their quarters, interrupting their communications, and surprising their detachments. If they sometimes received, they often inflicted, considerable injury, and Ostorius was so exhausted by labour and vexation, that his death was attributed to his chagrin. His successor, Aulus Didius, found himself involved in a new war. Venusius, a chieftain of the Jugantes, had married Cartismandua. Both had been faithful allies to the Romans; but the queen, after a short interval, separated from her husband, and took to her bed a Briton named Vellocatus. Hostilities were the immediate consequence. Cartismandua, for her ancient services, claimed the aid of the Romans: the Brigantes, through hatred of the adultress, fought for Venusius. After several battles, the queen was compelled to leave the throne to her husband, and to lead a degraded life under the protection of her allies.

To Didius succeeded Veranius, whose early death made way for Suetonius Paulinus, a general of skill and reputation. The isle of Anglesea (Mona), the nursery and principal residence of the druids, had hitherto offered a secure retreat to those priests to whose influence and invectives was attributed the obstinate resistance of the Britons. To reduce it, Suetonius ordered his cavalry to swim across the strait, while the infantry should pass over in boats. On their approach to the sacred isle, they beheld the shore lined not only with warriors, but with bands of male and female druids. The former, with their arms outstretched to heaven, devoted the invaders to the god of war; the latter, in habits of mourning, with their hair floating in the wind, and lighted torches in their hands, ran in all directions along the beach. The Romans were seized with a superstitious horror. For a moment they refused to advance: shame and the reproaches of their leader urged them to the attack. The victory was easy and bloodless. The power of the druids received a shock from which it never recovered. Their altars were overturned, their sacred groves fell beneath the axe of the legionaries, and their priests and priestesses were consumed in the flames which they had kindled for the destruction of their captives.

The Revolt of Boadicea

But the absence of Suetonius in Anglesea was the signal for a most formidable insurrection. Prasutagus, king of the Iceni, long the faithful ally of Rome, had made the emperor joint heir with his own daughters. The whole property was immediately seized by Catus, the imperial procurator. Boadicea, the widow of the late king, who ventured to remonstrate, was scourged

[62 A.D.]

as a slave, and the chastity of her daughter was violated by the Roman officers. The unhappy princess grasped the first opportunity of revenge. The history of her wrongs reminded each individual of his own sufferings; and in a few days almost all the conquered tribes were in arms. Colchester was the first to experience their fury. Within the walls of the colony had been erected a temple to the divinity of Claudius, the subjugator of Britain, and the natives were eager to demolish this monument of their servitude. At the first assault the town was reduced to ashes: the walls of the temple protracted the fate of the garrison only two days. Petilius Cerealis marched with the ninth legion to their assistance. It was trodden under foot by the multitude of the insurgents.

By this time Suetonius had returned to London, already a populous and opulent mart. Unable to protect the town, he retired, taking with him such of the inhabitants as were willing to share his fortunes. London was soon consumed by the flames; and shortly afterwards the municipal town of St. Albans (Verulam) experienced the same fate. The fury of the Britons treated as enemies all who had not joined in the insurrection. The reported slaughter of seventy thousand victims, without distinction of sex or age, of rank or country, attests both the violence of their revenge and the extent of country through which they followed the Romans.

Suetonius was at last compelled to turn his face to the enemy. Though fear had prevented the second legion from joining in his retreat, he had collected from the different garrisons ten thousand men, and had chosen a position in which he could be attacked only in front. The Britons were collected in masses around their different chieftains; their wives and children occupied a long line of carriages in the rear; and the air resounded with their cries and imprecations. The Romans, motionless and silent, permitted them to approach; and then, rushing forward in the form of a wedge, overturned everything within their reach. The battle, however, was long and fiercely maintained. Numbers on the part of the natives supplied the want of discipline; and a succession of conflicts almost exhausted the patience of the legionaries. Victorious at last, the Romans took a severe revenge. They granted no quarter: and the women and children were involved in the same carnage with the combatants. Were success to be estimated by the multitude of the slain, Tacitus[h] was justified in comparing this with the most glorious victories of ancient Rome. He estimates the loss of the Britons at eighty thousand men.[1] The fugitives, however, who escaped, offered to try again the fortune of war; but Boadicea, who had led them to the field and shared the dangers of the day, refused to survive this defeat, and terminated her misfortunes by a voluntary death.

If this splendid action preserved the ascendancy of the Roman arms it did not put an end to the war. A notion prevailed in the imperial court that the obstinacy of the Britons arose from the dread which the severity of Suetonius had inspired. He was recalled; and under the milder administration of his three successors, Turpilianus, Trebellius, and Bolanus, the natives within the Roman pale were gradually inured to the yoke. But the task of tranquillising the province, the mutinous spirit of the army, and the rival claims of competitors for the empire, prevented these governors from making any attempts against the independent portion of Britain. As soon as Vespasian had assumed the purple, a new era commenced. Petilius Cerealis was ordered to reduce the Brigantes, and in the space of five years that pow-

[1 This figure, of course, like all the figures given by Tacitus and other classic and mediæval writers in their accounts of military events, is absurdly exaggerated.]

erful tribe was added to the subjects of the empire. Julius Frontinus was his successor, and during the three years of his government he nearly subdued the warlike nation of the Silures.

THE GOVERNORSHIP OF AGRICOLA

But the reputation of preceding governors was obscured by the more splendid and more lasting fame of Cneius Julius Agricola. When that commander arrived (78 A.D.), the army had been dismissed into winter quarters. He immediately summoned it again to the field, marched into the territory of the Ordovices, who had surprised a squadron of Roman horse; and put to the sword the greater part of that nation. Preceded by the terror of his name, he crossed over to Anglesea. The natives offered no resistance, and the sacred isle was a second time added to the empire. In the two next campaigns he gradually extended the limits of his government to the Tay. Tribe after tribe was compelled to submit, garrisons were stationed in every commanding situation, and with the prospect of success was removed the principal incentive to rebellion. The fourth summer was employed in securing a strong frontier to the Roman conquests; and a line of forts from the Firth of Forth to that of Clyde bade defiance to the inroads of the more northern Britons.

Agricola, sensible of the errors of his predecessors, reformed the civil administration in all its branches, established a more equitable system of taxation, listened with kindness to the complaints of the natives, and severely punished the tyranny of inferior officers. The Britons were charmed with the mildness and justice of his government.

The next year, having received the submission of the tribes in the neighbourhood of the Forth, Agricola pushed his advances along the eastern shore. The operations of the army on land were combined with those of a numerous fleet at sea, but the campaign seems to have conferred little honour on the imperial arms.

Resolved to distinguish the eighth and last year (84 A.D.) of his government, Agricola assembled all his forces and added to their number several cohorts of Britons raised among the tribes of the south. The Caledonians were apprised of their danger: and thirty thousand warriors under the command of Galgacus undertook to defend the passage of the Grampian Mountains.[1] They were discovered, divided into clans, posted one below the other on the declivity of a hill. The plain at its foot was covered with horsemen and armed chariots. Agricola drew up his army in two lines, in the first of which he placed the auxiliaries, in the other the legions. As long as they fought with missile weapons, the Caledonians, from their numbers, retained the advantage; but their unwieldy and unpointed swords were of little use in close action, and they were gradually driven up the hill by the steady pressure of the auxiliaries. An attempt to surprise the rear of the Romans was defeated by the vigilance of the general, who charged in return the flank of the Caledonians, and threw them into disorder. The courage or despair of a few detached bodies protracted the conflict till night. The next morning presented a very different scene. A vast and dreary solitude had succeeded to the noise and turmoil of the preceding day: and columns of smoke rising on the verge of the horizon proved that the Caledonians had burned their cottages in their flight. Ten thousand Caledonians, and about four hundred Romans are said by Tacitus[h] to have fallen in the battle.

[1 Tacitus[h] appears to have written this "Mons Groupius." His editors transformed the "Groupius" into "Grampius," but there is no authority whatever for the latter name.]

[78–84 A.D.]

After this victory the army returned to winter quarters: the fleet pursued its voyage, and sailing around the island, arrived at the port of Sandwich, from which it had commenced the expedition.[1] By the jealousy of the Emperor Domitian, the ornaments, but not the parade, of a triumph were granted to Agricola, who, having surrendered the command to his successor, Lucullus, returned to Rome, waited on his imperial master, and sank into obscurity.

The Roman power was now firmly established in the island. The tribes which had submitted made no attempt to recover their independence: and the Caledonians, humbled by their last defeat, were content to roam without molestation in their native forests. The successors of Agricola, instead of conducting the legions in the field, were employed in settling the details of the provincial government, and in assimilating the state of Britain to that of the other countries which had been incorporated in the empire.[b2]

A picture is drawn of this great soldier and statesman, Agricola, by his son-in-law, the historian Tacitus,[h] in which, amid all the flattery of affection, and

ROMAN LIGHTHOUSE, CHURCH AND TRENCHES, DOVER CASTLE

the satire which the portrait of a good and generous man was intended to be upon a generation in which goodness and generosity were unknown, it is easy to trace the true lineaments of a just and sagacious leader. In seven campaigns, from the year 78 to 84 A.D., the benefits of a strong hand and benevolent will were shown throughout the island. The more intelligent of the natives began to perceive something far more valuable in the regulated freedom of their Roman conquerors than the wild absence of law and order which they called liberty. They clustered around the *castra*, where justice was administered in the grand language which Cicero had ennobled in pleading the cause of dethroned kings and oppressed populations—where they saw the wonders of Grecian art ornamenting the walls and floors of the *proprætor's* dwelling—where the majestic toga of the civil officer had greater respect paid to it than the military cloak of the tribune; and lost in surprise, or fired with emulation at all these things, they despised the mental poverty of their former state; and we learn that

[1 Ramsay[k] says: "The achievements of the year were wound up by the circumnavigation of Britain by the fleet, which, sailing northwards from the Forth of Tay, doubled the Northern capes and then rounding the Western and Southern coasts, completed the circuit by returning to its winter station, apparently in the Humber." The Orkneys are thought to have been discovered on the same trip.]

[2 In connection with the Roman occupation and rule in Britain the spurious treatise entitled *de Situ Britanniæ* and attributed to Richard of Cirencester, is worth noting. This curious work, which described in great detail the organisation of the Roman government of Britain, was for over one hundred and twenty years almost universally believed to be an addition of great value to the history of Roman Britain, and was accepted and utilised by such historians as Gibbon,[bb] Lappenberg[z] and Lingard.[b] It was "discovered" and published in 1747 by Professor Bertram of the University of Copenhagen, but the original manuscript could never be produced, and at any rate the grounds for attributing the work to Richard of Cirencester, a monk of the fourteenth century, another work of undoubted authority by whom is extant, were very insufficient.]

[*ca.* 84 A.D.]

many British chieftains at this time became masters of the Latin tongue, and affected Roman manners and tastes. Tacitus, whose hatred of the tyranny of his time makes him savagely devoted to the untrammelled happiness of a barbarian life, attributes to Agricola the cunning design of keeping the Britons in subjection by effeminising their minds with poetry and the arts. He encouraged them to build spacious houses and noble temples; to adopt the Roman dress, and to taste all the pleasures of luxury and vice. What Tacitus calls luxury and vice were probably immense improvements both in life and morals upon the brutalised habitudes of the woods from which they had emerged. They probably ate cooked food instead of raw meat, and cheated each other in trade instead of murdering their enemy from behind a tree and selling his wives and daughters into slavery.

BRITON OF THE INTERIOR

The marshes were drained, the wood was cut down, the sunshine poured into its recesses, and the dreadful Taranis (Jupiter) or omnipotent Thoth (Mercury) was found to be no more terrifying than a death's-head lantern in the blaze of day. If a savage ceases to fear his gods, he despises them. Long-bearded priests, pretending to see visions at the farther end of caves, and to gather wisdom from bunches of mistletoe, were found out to be wretched impostors when the cave was turned into a granary of corn, and the oak that nourished the mistletoe had been cut down to fence a field. There were large tracts of country all round the stations of the Roman armies where the harvests were sown, and reaped, and gathered in peace. The wives and families of the soldiers came over to join them in their island quarters, and at last, colonists in the true sense of the word, removed their goods and household hopes from Italy or Cisalpine Gaul, and established themselves as permanent occupiers and owners of the soil. They came over to seek new employment for their skill and labour—they ploughed, and wove, and painted—built noble galleys for the protection of the shore, and elegant carriages for traffic on the roads. Mighty changes had taken place upon the communication between camp and camp since the days of the unsocial Gael. Broad highways, with a noble disdain of engineering difficulties, went on, straight as an arrow from the bow, to the point they aimed at. Climbing steep hills or sinking into valleys, turning neither to the right nor left, the wonderful flight was pursued. Raised eighteen inches at the centre, the road admitted of drainage to the ditch at each side; the materials were massive blocks of stone; the workmanship extraordinary for its care and finish; and thousands of thought-

less travellers have trotted or rolled along these solid and enduring causeways without considering their obligations to the real conquerors and civilisers of the land. The ancient inhabitants are supposed to have had some pathways of communication between the remote districts of the south. But it was the Romans, who knew the value of good roads, both morally and politically, who converted the rude levellings of their predecessors into the spacious highways which united the most distant portions of their dominions.

HADRIAN AND SEVERUS

Though Agricola had defeated, he had not been able to subdue, the Caledonians. After his departure they frequently crossed the line of forts between the two firths, and in less than thirty years the state of Britain had become so precarious as to require the presence of the Emperor Hadrian (120 A.D.). Of his exploits history is silent; but on the testimony of medals and inscriptions, we may believe that he expelled the barbarians and recovered the provinces which had been lost. If, however, his victories have been forgotten, his memory has been preserved by a military work, which was executed under his direction, and has hitherto defied the ravages of time. Convinced by experience that the *pretentura* thrown up by Agricola could not confine the northern tribes, he resolved to oppose a second barrier to their incursions, by drawing a ditch and rampart across the island, from the Solway Firth on the western, to the mouth of the Tyne on the eastern, coast. This mighty fortification measured in length more than sixty miles; and strong bodies of troops were permanently stationed at short intervals on the whole extent of the line.[1]

But the tranquillity which had been established by Hadrian was repeatedly disturbed during the reign of his successor, Antoninus. On the north of the *vallum* the six tribes of the Maætæ reasserted their independence; on the south the Brigantes took up arms, and invaded the territory of the Ordovices. Lollius Urbicus was appointed *proprætor* of Britain. He chastised the Brigantes, subdued the Maætæ, and, in imitation of Hadrian, carried a similar fortification across the isthmus, from the Forth to the Clyde, a distance of more than thirty-six miles. In honour of the emperor, it was called the *vallum* [or more commonly wall] of Antoninus.

In the reign of Commodus the incursions [of the Caledonians] assumed a more formidable appearance, and the discontent of the legions alarmed the emperor for the safety of Britain. Ulpius Marcellus, a soldier of valour and integrity, was made *proprætor*. He restored the discipline of the army, and drove the Caledonians back to their native mountains. But his services were requited with ingratitude. By his severity he incurred the hatred of a seditious soldiery, while his glory excited the jealousy of a dissolute prince, and Commodus recalled him from his command.

The government of Britain was next conferred on Clodius Albinus. His birth and abilities awakened the jealousy of his imperial master, who, either

[1] The *vallum* may be traced from Burgh-on-the-Sands to the town of Newcastle, avoiding the mountains, and winding along the valleys. The ditch appears to have been eleven feet in breadth and nine in depth: the rampart, at the present day, rises in some parts six feet above the original surface. Besides this, two *aggeres* or mounds of earth, one on the north, the other on the south, run the whole length in lines parallel to the ditch, at the distance of nearly twenty feet. It is probable that the mound to the south was a military road; and that the original work of Hadrian, like that of Antoninus between the firths, consisted of no more than the ditch, the rampart, and the road. The *agger* on the north might be afterwards added as a military way for the wall of Severus, when the *vallum* could be no longer considered as a work of defence.

with the view of securing his fidelity, or, as is more probable, of trying his ambition, offered him the rank and authority of Cæsar. Albinus had the prudence to decline the insidious present; but after the death of Commodus, and the ephemeral reigns of Pertinax and Julian, he willingly accepted the same dignity from the emperor Severus. It soon, however, appeared that, with all the parade of friendship, Severus was a secret and mortal enemy; and Albinus, by the advice of his friends, assumed the imperial purple (193 A.D.), and led the British legions into Gaul. The two armies, amounting to one hundred thousand men, fought in the plain of Trévoux (Trivultium), near Lyons (Lugdunum). Severus obtained the victory, and the British Cæsar paid with his head the forfeit of his ambition (197 A.D.).

Severus was now undisputed master of the empire. To abolish the exorbitant power of the prefect of Britain, he divided the island into two governments, bestowing the one on Heraclianus, and the other on Virius Lupus. The latter, with an army of new levies, was unable to withstand the united efforts of the Maætæ and Caledonians, and was compelled to purchase with money a precarious respite from their incursions. The expedient, though it procured a temporary forbearance, invited them to a repetition of the attempt; and Lupus, wearied with continued hostilities, solicited the presence of the emperor and the aid of a numerous army.

Though Severus was advanced in years, and declining in health, he cheerfully obeyed the summons of his lieutenant. He was accompanied by his two sons, Caracalla and Geta: to the younger he committed the civil government of the province; to Caracalla he assigned a part in the projected expedition. When the army moved from York, the selection of the commanders, the number of the legions and auxiliary cohorts, and the long train of carriages laden with provisions and implements of war, proclaimed the determination of the emperor to subdue, if not to exterminate, all the rebellious tribes in the north. The [northern] Britons were but ill provided against so formidable an invasion. They possessed no other defensive armour than a narrow target. Their weapons were a dirk, an unwieldy sword hanging from the waist by an iron chain, and a short lance, from one extremity of which was suspended a bell. But they were aided by the nature of the country, abounding in mountains, lakes, and forests; by constitutions inured to fatigue, hunger, and every privation; by habits of running, swimming, and wading through rivers and morasses; and above all, by a contempt of danger, and an unconquerable love of freedom. The progress of the Romans was constantly interrupted by the necessity of opening roads through the woods, of throwing bridges over the rivers, and of erecting causeways across the marshes. It was in vain that Severus sought for an enemy in front. The natives had wisely divided themselves into detachments, which hung on the flanks of the Romans, watched every advantage, and often inflicted a sudden and severe wound on the long and encumbered line of their enemies. Still the emperor pressed forward till he reached the Firth of Cromarty, where he condescended to accept the offers of submission which he had formerly refused; and, that he might appear to punish the obstinacy of the natives, exacted the nominal surrender of a part of their territory. But this trivial advantage had been dearly purchased, and the number of the Romans who perished by fatigue, by disease, and by the sword, has been estimated at fifty thousand.[1]

When Severus returned to York, he had leisure to devise means for the

[1 Dion Cassius[i] is the authority for this statement of the losses of Severus. This figure Ramsay[k] declares to be absurd and says it is very unlikely that he had as many as fifty thousand troops with him altogether.]

[208–280 A.D.]

future security of the southern provinces. From what he had seen, he was convinced that no rampart of turf could resist the assaults of these active and persevering barbarians; and he determined to confine their incursions by raising a solid wall of stone a few paces to the north of the *vallum* of Hadrian. In the neighbourhood of the sea it preserved a parallel direction; but as it approached the higher ground, leaving the work of that emperor to wind its circuitous course along the valleys, it boldly ascended the most lofty eminences, and ran along the margin of the most abrupt precipices. Its height was twelve feet; its breadth at the foundation varied from two to three yards. In front was sunk a ditch of the same dimensions with that of Hadrian; and for its protection were assigned four squadrons and fourteen cohorts, composing an army of ten thousand men, quartered in eighteen stations along the line of the wall.[1]

Scarcely had the Romans evacuated the territory of the Caledonians and Maætæ, when information was brought to Severus that the barbarians had recommenced hostilities. His infirmities had been so much increased by the fatigue of the late campaign, that he was no longer able to join the army. He gave the command to Caracalla, with an injunction to extirpate the whole race without mercy. But that prince had a far different object in view—to exclude his brother Geta from the succession. Instead of marching against the Britons, he endeavoured to gain the affection of the troops by indulgence and donatives; and, as soon as his father had expired at York, renewed the peace, disbanded the army, and returned to Rome.

The Successors of Severus

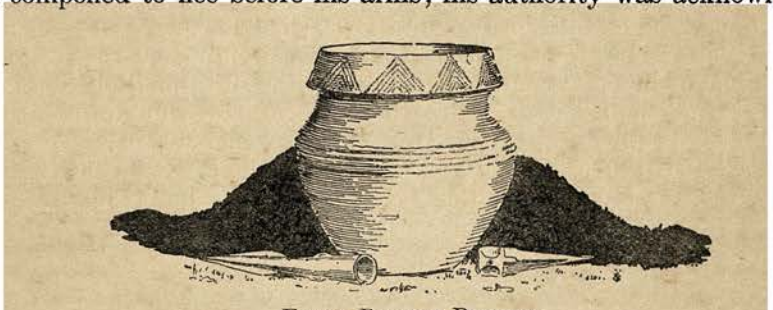
History is little more than a record of the miseries inflicted on the many by the passions of the few. If then, for more than seventy years from the death of Severus, Britain has escaped the notice of the ancient annalists, we may infer that they were years of comparative tranquillity and happiness. The northern tribes respected the strength of the new fortification and the valour of the army by which it was guarded: and the natives of the south, habituated from their infancy to submission, bore without impatience the yoke which had pressed so heavily on their free-born fathers. The rest of the empire was convulsed by the claims of the numerous competitors, known by the name of the thirty tyrants.

This distracted state of the empire had opened new prospects to the barbarians, who, under the appellations of Franks and Saxons, possessed the coast from the mouth of the Rhine to the extremity of Jutland (the Cim-

[1 There are few points in early British history upon which such divergent conclusions have been reached as that of the Roman walls. As high an authority as Elton *g* thinks that the whole system of defence bears the impress of a single mind, and that both stone wall and earthen *vallum* with their stations, camps, and parallel roads, were designed and constructed by Hadrian. Ramsay,*k* writing fifteen years later, holds to the more generally accepted theory that the *vallum* was the work of Hadrian, and that the stone wall was constructed at a later date by Septimius Severus. The earliest evidence is contained in the biographies of Hadrian and Severus written by Spartianus,*i* whose statement that both emperors built walls between the two oceans was accepted without question by later writers. Ramsay, taking the word of Spartianus, reasons simply. He holds that the *vallum* was the earlier work, and therefore the work of Hadrian, "because it seems clear that no men with a stone wall to protect them would seek to pile up useless earthworks behind it; while men who had only an earthen rampart to defend them might seek to supplement its construction by a bulwark of a stronger kind." The fortifications constructed by Urbicus along the line of Agricola's forts, and known as the "Wall of Antoninus," consisted of an earthen embankment and ditch, similar to but both deeper and higher than the *vallum* of Hadrian, and having military stations and watch-towers at regular intervals.]

brican Chersonesus). They swept into their own ports the commerce of the narrow seas, and insulted by their predatory expeditions the shores of Gaul and Britain. To chastise or restrain their insolence, the command of a powerful fleet, with the title of Count of the Saxon Shore, was given by the emperors Diocletian and Maximian to Carausius, an experienced officer, and a Menapian (Fleming) by birth. His conduct soon awakened suspicion. The pirates continued their depredations with impunity; a portion of their spoil was regularly surrendered to Carausius; and the money was employed in debauching the loyalty of the mariners. Maximian prepared to punish his perfidy. But the Menapian unexpectedly fortified Boulogne, concluded an alliance with the barbarians, sailed to Britain, induced the army and fleet to espouse his cause, and assuming with the imperial purple the name of Augustus (287 A.D.), set at defiance the whole power of Rome.

The reign of this adventurer was fortunate and glorious. The Caledonians were compelled to flee before his arms; his authority was acknowledged on



EARLY BRITISH POTTERY

the western coast of Gaul, and a numerous fleet carried the terror of his name to the entrance of the Mediterranean. It was not, however, to be expected that the emperors would tamely acquiesce in his usurpation. At first, indeed, they thought it more prudent to admit him as their colleague: but when they had adopted the two cæsars Galerius and Constantius Chlorus, they assigned to the latter the task of wresting Britain from his dominion. Constantius began the attempt with the siege of Boulogne. By his orders the mouth of the harbour was obstructed by a mound of stones; and the garrison, cut off from any assistance from Britain, was, after an obstinate resistance, compelled to surrender. But Carausius was still master of the sea, and at the head of a numerous army. While he was employed in providing against a distant danger, he fell a victim to domestic treachery; and in the eighth year of his reign was murdered at York by Allectus, a minister who had abused his confidence, and dreaded his resentment (297 A.D.).

Allectus enjoyed during three years the reward of his treachery. The time was spent by Constantius in preparing a fleet which might safely transport his troops to the island. To distract the attention of the enemy, it was divided into two squadrons, of which one under his command was stationed at Boulogne, the other, under that of the prefect Asclepiodotus, in the mouth of the Seine. The latter, owing to the impatience of the mariners, was the first which put to sea; and sailing under the cover of a fog, passed unobserved by the British fleet near the Isle of Wight, and reached without opposition the adjacent coast. Constantius himself, with a still more powerful armament, directed his course to the shore of Kent; and at his landing received the pleasing intelligence that Allectus was dead. On the first news of the arrival of

[300-314 A.D.]

Asclepiodotus, the usurper had hastened towards the spot: but the greater part of his forces were unable to equal his speed, and with his guard, a band of Franks, he was speedily overwhelmed by the Romans. A division of the Roman fleet, which had separated in the dark, entered the Thames, and advanced without meeting an enemy to the neighbourhood of London, and Constantius himself was hailed by the inhabitants as their sovereign and deliverer. He immediately restored the imperial authority, Britain became his favourite residence, and the natives enjoyed the benefit of a mild and equitable administration.

CHRISTIANITY IN BRITAIN

At the distance of so many ages it is impossible to discover by whom Christianity was first preached in the island. Some writers have ascribed that province to St. Peter; others have preferred the rival claim of St. Paul: but both opinions, improbable as they are in themselves, rest on the most slender evidence; on testimonies which are many of them irrelevant, all ambiguous and unsatisfactory. It is, however, certain that at a very early period there were Christians in Britain: nor is it difficult to account for the circumstance, from the intercourse which had long subsisted between the island and Rome. Of the Romans whom at that period choice or necessity conducted to Britain, and of the Britons who were induced to visit Rome, some would of course become acquainted with the professors of the gospel, and yield to the exertions of their zeal.

We have undoubted proof that the believers were numerous, and that a regular hierarchy had been instituted before the close of the third century. For by contemporary writers the church of Britain is always put on an equality with the churches of Spain and Gaul; and in one of the most early of the western councils, that of Arles in 314 A.D., we meet with the names of three British bishops, Eborius of York, Restitutus of London, and Adelphius of Lincoln.

It has been observed that the British Christians had hitherto escaped the persecutions to which their continental brethren were repeatedly exposed. But in the beginning of the fourth century, Diocletian and Maximian determined to avenge the disasters of the empire on the professors of the gospel; and edicts were published by which the churches in every province were ordered to be demolished, and the refusal to worship the gods of paganism was made a crime punishable with death. Though Constantius might condemn, he dared not forbid the execution of the imperial mandate: but he was careful at the same time to show by his conduct his own opinion of religious persecution. Assembling around him the Christian officers of his household, he communicated to them the will of the emperors, and added that they must determine to resign their employments, or to abjure the worship of Christ. If some among them preferred their interest to their religion, they received the reward which their perfidy deserved. The cæsar dismissed them from his service, observing that he would never trust the fidelity of men who had proved themselves traitors to their God. But the moderation of Constantius did not restrain the zeal of the inferior magistrates. The churches in almost every district were levelled with the ground: and of the Christians many fled for safety to the forests and mountains, many suffered with constancy both torture and death. Gildas[1] has preserved the names of Julius and Aaron, citizens of Caerleon-upon-Usk; and the memory of Alban, the

protomartyr of Britain, was long celebrated both in his own country and among the neighbouring nations. But within less than two years Diocletian and Maximian resigned the purple; Constantius and Galerius assumed the title of emperors, and the freedom of religious worship was restored to the Christian inhabitants of the island.[b]

The account of Diocletian's persecutions in England rests largely on the authority of Gildas,[l] who is hardly to be relied on for events which took place before his own time. His story is undoubtedly highly coloured and exaggerated. Even the legend of the martyrdom of St. Alban as related by him can hardly be accepted as it stands. Contemporary Latin writers say that the persecutions in Gaul and Britain were confined to a destruction of the churches, and that no violence was offered to persons. It is surmised that St. Alban may have fallen a victim to some popular outbreak, and it is very possible that his death occurred prior to the time of Diocletian.[a]

Constantius, Constantine, and Their Successors

Constantius, while he was yet in an inferior situation, had married Helena, a native of Bithynia according to some writers, the daughter of a British prince if we may believe our national historians. When he was raised to the dignity of Cæsar, he was compelled to repudiate Helena for Theodora, the daughter-in-law of Maximian; but Helena had already borne him a son, the celebrated Constantine, on whom posterity has bestowed the epithet of the "great." The young prince was educated an honourable hostage in the court, first of Diocletian, and then of Galerius: but on the report that his father's health was rapidly declining, he snatched a favourable moment to escape, and maiming at every post the horses which were not necessary for his flight, contrived to retard the speed of his pursuers. He reached York a few days before Constantius expired; was recommended by him to the affection of the soldiery, and assumed, with their approbation, the titles of Cæsar and Augustus. The sequel of his story, and the long course of victories by which he united the whole empire under his own authority, are subjects foreign from these sheets.

When Constantine became sole emperor, Britain was placed under the jurisdiction of the prefect of the Gauls, whose authority extended from the wall of Antoninus to the southern limits of Mauretania Tingitana (North-west Africa). His deputy with the title of vicar (or vice-prefect) of Britain resided at York.[b] The ancient tribal boundaries of Britain were disregarded, and the island divided into five new provinces, each in charge of a civil governor, whose authority extended to all questions of justice and finance. The names of the five divisions were Britannia Prima, Britannia Secunda, Flavia Cæsariensis, Maxima Cæsariensis, and Valentia. Their exact boundaries are not known, but modern historical scholars have come to a general agreement as to their location. Britannia Prima is supposed to have included that part of the island south of the Thames Valley; Britannia Secunda to have comprised roughly Wales and the Welsh Marches; Flavia Cæsariensis to have extended from the Thames to the Humber, and Maxima Cæsariensis to have occupied the region between the Humber and the wall of Antoninus. Valentia, which was possibly not established until some time later, probably included the region north of the wall. The army was placed in command of three officers, the "count of Britain" (*comes Britanniæ*), who was apparently the commander-in-chief, the "duke of Britain," who commanded in the

[309-359 A.D.]

north, and the "count of the Saxon shore," who had charge of the defence of the southeastern coast.[1a]

Under Constantine and his sons Britain enjoyed more than fifty years of tranquillity. The aggressions of the barbarians were repressed; and industry and commerce were encouraged. The first check was given to the public prosperity by the cruelty and avarice of Paulus, a Spanish notary.[2] He had been sent to the island with a commission from the Emperor Constantius to inquire into the conduct of the officers, who, during the general defection of the western armies, had adhered to the usurper Magnentius. Paulus was eminently skilled in all the arts of rapacity and chicanery; with him wealth was a sufficient presumption of guilt; and no man, whose possessions might fill the coffers of the notary and his imperial master, was ever acquitted at his tribunal. Martin, the vicar of Britain, had lamented, and sometimes interposed to prevent, these iniquitous proceedings. But he was informed that a deep scheme had been laid to involve him in the common delinquency; and, impelled by despair, he made an attempt on the life of the notary. The stroke was parried; and Martin instantly plunged his sword into his own heart. His real or pretended accomplices were punished with torture and confiscation, exile or death; and Paulus continued his career regardless of the hatred and imprecations of the natives. By Constantius he was applauded for his fidelity: Julian, the succeeding emperor, commanded him to be burnt alive.

FOURTH-CENTURY BRITON

It is remarkable that from this period the Caledonians and Maætæ tribes, which for two centuries had been the terror of the civilised Britons, disappeared without any ostensible cause from the page of history: and their places are supplied by the Picts and Scots, who, though differing from them in name, are described as barbarians equally savage in disposition and equally addicted to invasion and rapine. Of the origin of these two nations, which appear to start suddenly into existence in the course of the fourth century, many learned but fanciful theories have been invented. It seems manifest that the Picts were, under a new denomination, the very same people whom we have hitherto called Maætæ and Caledonians.[3] The

[1 The theory held by such eminent historians as Kemble,[cc] Palgrave,[dd] and Lappenberg,[z] that the "Saxon shore" in Britain derived its name from an early settlement of Saxons upon it, rather than from its use as a bulwark against the piratical attack of the Saxons, has been entirely discarded by more recent scholars following the lead of Doctor Guest.[ff] Stubbs[ee] says that it has no basis "either in fact or in probability." It must be remembered that there was another "Saxon shore" on the opposite French coast having its centre at Brittany.]

[2 Knight,[m] pointing a comparison that has been frequently made, says: "What the judge Jeffreys was to England in the seventeenth century, the notary Paulus was in the fourth century."]

[3 Gardiner,[n] agreeing with this conclusion, says: "The Picts were the same as the Caledonians of the time of Agricola. We do not know when they ceased to be Caledonians. The usual derivation of their name from the Latin *pictus*, said to have been given them because

name of Caledonians properly belonged to the natives of that long but narrow strip of land which stretches from Loch Fyne on the western, to the Firth of Tay on the eastern, coast: but it had been extended by the Romans to all the kindred and independent clans which lay between them and the northern extremity of the island. In the fourth century the mistake was discovered and rectified: and from that time not only the Caledonians, but their southern neighbours, the five tribes of the Maætæ, began to be known by the generic appellation of Picts, a word derived perhaps from the national custom of painting the body, more probably from the name which they bore in their own language.

The Scots came undoubtedly from Ireland, which, like its sister island, appears to have been colonised by adventurers from different countries. These were scattered on different points of the coast, while the interior was held by numerous clans of the Scoti, many of whom, in the fourth century, united with the Atecotti, a kindred clan in the neighbourhood of Loch Lomond, to plunder the rich provinces of the Roman Britons. But the Scots soon aspired to something more permanent than plunder. From the north of Ireland the passage was short and inviting: hordes of adventurers followed each other; settlements were obtained from the friendship, or extorted from the weakness, of the Picts; and at last the strangers acquired so marked a superiority over the indigenous tribes as to impart the name of Scotland to the northern division of Britain. It was long, however, before the two nations were blended in one people. We find the Picts distinguished from the Scots as late as the twelfth century.

Picts and Scots in the Roman Province

In the reign of Constantius the Picts and Scots entered the Roman province in considerable numbers. The cæsar Julian could not be spared from Gaul: and Lupicinus, whom he sent as his deputy, did not venture to meet the invaders. This confession of weakness incited them to repeat their inroads; and at each repetition they penetrated farther into the country. They maintained spies in the Roman army; they tempted the fidelity of the garrisons; and they induced many of the foreign auxiliaries to join them in the pursuit of plunder. At length the emperor Valentinian was alarmed for the safety of the island, and Theodosius was appointed to the command. That celebrated officer, with the flower of the Gallic army, landed at Richborough (Rutupiæ), and, having divided his troops into several corps, attacked and defeated the marauding parties of the barbarians. He entered London in triumph (367 A.D.), and spent a few weeks in making preparations for new victories. The deserters were induced by an act of amnesty to rejoin their standards; the ancient discipline of the army was revived; supplies and reinforcements were provided; and, on the recommencement of hostilities, the invaders, after several bloody encounters, retired beyond the ancient limits of the empire; and Theodosius applied himself to re-establish the former system of government. The political and financial departments he confided to the vicar Civilis; and, as commander of the army, repaired the fortifications, placed garrisons in the military stations, and restored the province of Valentia, which had long been abandoned.

they painted their bodies, is inaccurate. They were probably Iberians." The Scots at that time lived in north Ireland. Rhyse concludes that "Scotus" is simply the Latin name for Gael.]

LAST YEARS OF ROMAN RULE

Gratian succeeded his father Valentinian in the empire (375 A.D.), and invested with the purple Theodosius the Younger, the son of the deliverer of Britain [placing him in control of the Eastern Empire]. There was at the time in the island an officer named Clemens Maximus, of great abilities and of greater ambition. Inflamed with jealousy by the promotion of one who had been his equal, he began to intrigue with the soldiery, and artfully extorted from their gratitude or their credulity an offer of the title of Augustus. It was not without apparent reluctance that he yielded to their entreaties: but his subsequent conduct betrayed his real sentiments. Not content with the possession of Britain, he aspired to the whole of the Western Empire. At the head of the British army he sailed to the mouth of the Rhine; the murder of Gratian gave him possession of Gaul, and the greater part of Italy was compelled to submit to his authority. He reigned with dignity, and severely chastised the Picts and Scots, who attempted to renew their inroads. Theodosius [at first] acknowledged his title; but roused at last by shame and apprehension, took the field against the usurper. On the banks of the Save (Savus) in Pannonia, the first shock was given to the power of Maximus; and the city of Aquileia soon afterwards saw him stripped of the imperial ornaments and beheaded by order of his victorious opponent (388 A.D.). [The Britons who had followed his standard never returned to their native country, and the defenceless state in which it was left by their absence exposed it to the inroads of its inveterate enemies.]

This favourable opportunity did not escape the vigilance of the Picts and Scots. They experienced only a feeble resistance from the small force that remained in the island, and returned home laden with the plunder of the provinces. Their repeated inroads impelled the Britons to lay their distressed situation before the imperial court, probably through the means of Chrysantus the vicar, whose administration is mentioned with applause: and Stilicho, the master of the infantry and cavalry, despatched to their assistance a body of troops, which repelled the invaders, and confined them within their own territories.

But the great fabric of the Roman power was now shaken to its foundation. Hordes of barbarians, under different denominations, issuing from the unknown regions of the east and the north, had depopulated the fairest of the provinces; and a torrent of Goths, Vandals and Alans, under the celebrated Alaric, had poured from the summit of the Julian Alps into the flourishing plains of Italy. It became necessary to recall the troops from the extremities to defend the heart of the empire; and the cohorts which had been stationed along the walls in Britain fought and triumphed under the command of Stilicho in the bloody battle of Pollentia (403 A.D.). After the retreat of Alaric, the British forces seem to have returned to the island, and to have driven back the Picts, who had taken advantage of their absence to plunder the neighbouring province. But within two or three years the German nations, bursting into Gaul, spread devastation from one extremity to the other, and the legions in Britain, cut off from all communication with the emperor Honorius, determined to elect an emperor for themselves. The purple was bestowed on Marcus, one of their officers, who soon lost his life in a sedition of the soldiery. The next object of their choice was Gratian, a native of one of the British *municipia*, who, at the end of four months, experienced the fate of his predecessor. This dangerous pre-eminence was,

however, still an object of competition. Constantine, a soldier in the ranks, with no other pretensions than his name, offered himself to their suffrages. He was proclaimed Augustus, led them to Boulogne, and with the assistance of some Roman corps, which lay dispersed in the neighbourhood, cleared the province of the barbarians. His son Constans, who is said to have worn the monastic habit at Winchester, was named cæsar, and hastened to take possession of Spain. But their prosperity was of very short duration. The son was put to death at Vienne by Gerontius, one of his own officers; and the father was [besieged and captured] at Arles by Constantius, who commanded the forces of Honorius [and carried off to Ravenna, where he was beheaded] (411 A.D.).

While Constantine was thus hastening to his ruin, Britain had been the theatre of an important revolution. The natives, left without a military force, and exposed to the inroads of their enemies, determined to eject an authority which was unable to afford them protection. They deposed the Roman magistrates,[1] proclaimed their own independence, took up arms, and with the spirit of freemen, drove the barbarians out of their territories. When the intelligence reached Ravenna, Honorius, the legitimate emperor, wrote to the states of Britain "to provide for their own defence." By this ambiguous expression he has been thought to have released them from their allegiance; perhaps his only object was to authorize their present efforts.

From Zosimus[o] we learn that, on the extinction of the imperial authority in the island, the British states established domestic governments according to circumstances.[2] These states were undoubtedly the different cities to which Honorius had directed his letters. As the colonies, *municipia*, and Latin towns, had always formed so many separate commonwealths under the superintendence of the provincial presidents, they would probably wish to retain the forms of government to which they had so long been habituated. It is, however, easy to conceive that during the anarchy that must have been produced by the sudden removal of the Roman magistrates, and the confusion occasioned by the repeated incursions of the Picts and Scots, many a fortunate leader would abuse his own power and the confidence of his fellow-citizens to usurp the sovereign authority. In a few years every trace of popular government had vanished: and all the provinces which had belonged to the empire were divided among a multitude of petty chieftains, principally of British, but partly of Roman, origin. They were dignified with the title of kings, though the dominions of many were confined within narrower limits than most of our present counties: and their ambition, their wars, and their vices, inflicted on the country more permanent and extensive injuries than had ever been suffered from the incursions of foreign enemies. Soon after the Britons became independent, the greater part of Europe was depopulated by the two dreadful scourges of pestilence and famine. This island did not escape the general calamity: and the Scots and Picts seized the favourable moment for the renewal of their inroads. The dissensions of the native

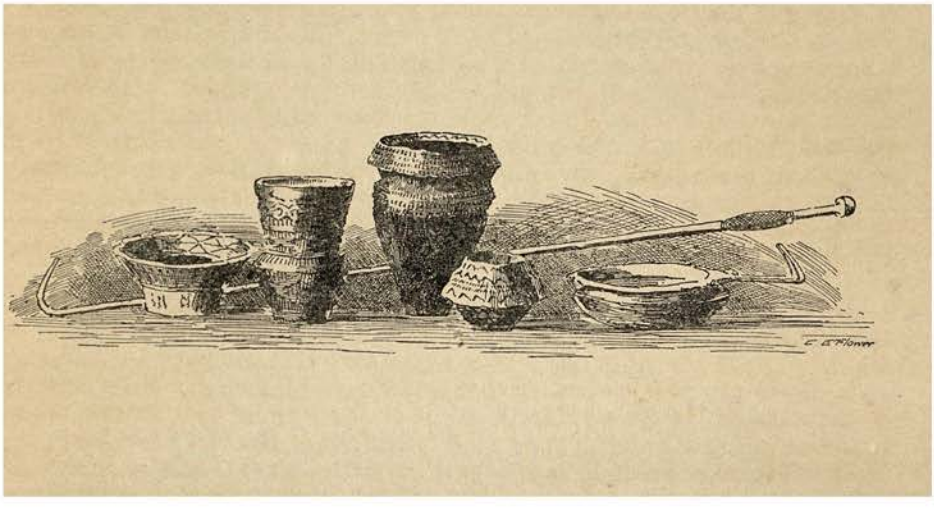
[1 This statement rests on the authority of Zosimus,[o] the Greek historian. In this connection Mommsen's[p] words, "It was not Britain that gave up Rome, but Rome that gave up Britain," are worth quoting.]

[2 The status of Britain during this period is the subject of much controversy. Rhys,[e] who must be considered one of the highest authorities on Roman as on Celtic Britain, says: "It would be a mistake to take for granted that the people of Roman Britain, as soon as they were rid of the officials of the empire, resolved themselves into small communities or tribal states independent of each other—a stage which the Britons had pretty well left behind them before the Roman Conquest, and it is not to be believed that the prolonged lesson of imperial centralisation had been altogether lost on them. They seem to have simply persisted on the lines of the military leaderships which the Romans had made a reality among them."]

[411-449 A.D.]

chieftains facilitated their attempts; district after district became the scene of devastation; till the approach of danger admonished the more southern Britons to provide for their own safety. Some solicited, but in vain, the protection of Ætius, the Roman general in Gaul:[1] others, under the guidance of Vortigern, the most powerful of the British kings, had recourse to an expedient which, however promising it might appear in the outset, proved in the result most fatal to the liberty of their country.[b]

[1 "The groans of the Britons to Ætius, for the third time consul," ran their plea, "The savages drive us to the sea, and the sea casts us back upon the savages; so arise two kinds of death, and we are either drowned or slaughtered."]



CHAPTER II

"THE ANGLO-SAXON CONQUEST"

[449–871 A.D.]

> The Saxons, Angles, and Jutes, although speaking the same language, worshipping the same gods and using the same laws, had no political unity like the Franks of Clovis; they were not moved by one impulse or invited by one opportunity. The conquest of Britain was the result of a series of separate expeditions, long continued and perhaps, in point of time, continuous but unconnected, and independent of one another. It was not until the middle of the fifth century that they assumed the dimensions of conquest, colonisation, migration; and when they have attained that character, the progress and success of the several attempts are not uniform; each little state reaches greatness by its own route, and the history of its growth makes a mark upon its constitution.—STUBBS.[o]

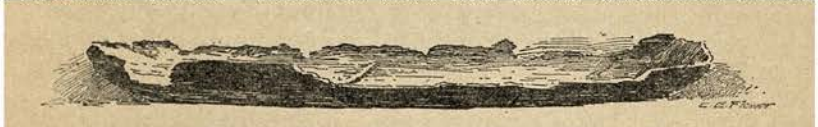
ELEVEN centuries ago an industrious and conscientious historian, desiring to give a record of the establishment of his forefathers in England, could find no fuller or better account than this: "About the year of Grace 445–446, the British inhabitants of England, deserted by the Roman masters who had enervated while they protected them, and exposed to the ravages of Picts and Scots from the extreme and barbarous portions of the island, called in the assistance of heathen Saxons from the continent of Europe. The strangers faithfully performed their task, and chastised the northern invaders; then, in scorn of the weakness of their employers, subjected them in turn to the yoke, and after various vicissitudes of fortune, established their own power upon the ruins of Roman and British civilisation." The few details which had reached the historian taught that the strangers were under the guidance of two brothers, Hengist and Horsa: that their armament was conveyed in three ships or keels: that it consisted of Jutes, Saxons and Angles: that their successes stimulated similar adventurers among their countrymen: and that in process of time their continued migrations were so large and numerous as

[*ca.* 450 A.D.]

to have reduced Anglia, their original home, to a desert. Such was the tale of the victorious Saxons in the eighth century.

Meagre indeed are the accounts which satisfied the most inquiring of our forefathers; yet such as they are, they were received as the undoubted truth, and appealed to in later periods as the earliest authentic record of our race. The acuter criticism of an age less prone to believe, more skilful in the appreciation of evidence, and familiar with the fleeting forms of mythical and epical thought, sees in them only a confused mass of traditions borrowed from the most heterogeneous sources, compacted rudely and with little ingenuity, and in which the smallest possible amount of historical truth is involved in a great deal of fable. Yet the truth which such traditions do nevertheless contain, yields to the alchemy of our days a golden harvest: if we cannot undoubtedly accept the details of such legends, they still point out to us at least the course we must pursue to discover the elements of fact upon which the Mythus and Epos rest, and guide us to the period and the locality where these took root and flourished.[c]

The annals of England for a period of thirty years after the temporary retirement of the Romans are so involved and contradictory that great scope is left for the ingenuity of historians to unravel and reconcile them. It was a period of disturbance and unrest in all quarters of the world. As soon as Rome was found to be weak, the savage peoples who had been collecting for ages on the limits of her power, and had been repelled by the strength of her legions and the awe they still entertained for her name, broke through the boundaries, and poured themselves all over the civilised lands which had resisted their attempts so long. Tribe after tribe of strange and uncouth name followed each other with the regularity and force of waves of the sea. Burgundians, Visigoths, and Suevi established themselves in Switzerland and Spain. The rich shores of Africa were seized by the Vandals; and the hardy sons of the north, the Saxons, the Jutes, and Angles prepared to follow the example of the other barbarians, and transport themselves into more fertile lands. There never was a prey more tempting or more easy than the disarmed and Romanised Britain. Its southern portion lay open to the hand of the first invader who chose to seize it. The inhabitants were wealthy and spiritless—the youth of the country and all its foreign garrisons had been carried over to resist the hordes which were devastating the Italian fields; little confidence could be placed in the turf bank which guarded them from the Picts and Scots, and still less in the undefended walls which surrounded their luxurious towns. Wherever there had in old times been a *castra*, or



ANCIENT BRITISH CANOE FOUND AT NORTH STOKE, SUSSEX

permanent camp, there was now a city filled with all the appliances of a civilisation which was, in fact, too high for the people on whom it had been impressed. They had no arms, no discipline, no patriotic feelings; they could only "eat, and sleep, and hoard," and left all the rest to the superior power.

The still unreclaimed barbarians of the north, bursting over the feeble ramparts of Hadrian and Severus, pressed onwards towards the central lowlands, and are reported to have made a dash upon London itself.[c] But necessity and fear at last produced some appearance of combination and courage

on the part of the civilised Britons. The towns entered into confederacies for mutual support. Arms were put into the hands of the population, and leaders arose who established their authority on independent terms. Their independence, however, took the unhappy form of mutual war. Instead of combining against the common foe, they weakened the country by factions and quarrels. In these civil distractions the contending parties bargained for assistance from every quarter. Enlisted on different sides in these local dissensions, the population had no central authority round which to gather. Town after town was therefore given to the flames by the advancing Picts and Scots on the north, and the returning thousands of ancient Britons from the borders of Wales. It is a mere rhetorical exaggeration of the now degraded condition of the Romanised natives, when we are told that they were incapable even of so unscientific an operation as building a stone wall. Perhaps they had found out the futility of these inanimate defences when brave hearts were no longer to be found within, and considered such bulwarks as labour thrown away. Hopeless of resisting, and too uncertain of their tenure to plough their fields, they allowed the land everywhere to go out of cultivation. When their northern invaders accordingly burst through the newly renovated walls, they found no active enemy to face them with arms in their hands. The desolation of the country was its true defence. The cities were attacked and plundered, but the inhabitants had betaken themselves to the woods and morasses; the corn was either hidden in holes in the earth or utterly destroyed, and the Caledonians were forced to retrace their steps by the want of food. While the Celtic warrior was reconciled to his paradise in the Grampians, by comparing it with the howling wildernesses of Leicestershire and Derby, the citizens crept stealthily out of their hiding-places, and resumed their old occupations.

HERO-TALES

The old dissensions, however, arose with the old condition. Rival chieftains again fought for the pre-eminence in a realm which neither of them could defend. Vortigern, of pure Celtic blood, was the leader of the old or national party, and was opposed by Ambrosius, whose name demonstrates his civilised descent, as champion of the Romanised natives. As if to scatter the last hope of combination, a religious schism embittered the feelings on both sides. With the marks of conflagration still blackening the ruins of their churches, and their houses scarcely recovered from the Celtic ravagers' assault, they disputed on the Pelagian heresy. Prodigies were related on both sides in support of their respective faiths. The orthodox Germanus of Auxerre had come over to arrange the question, and showed the credentials of his authority in a great victory over the Picts, where, by the mere cry of Hallelujah! which his newly baptised battalions of Britons were ordered to raise, he dispersed the enemy with enormous slaughter. But it was easier to slay the barbarians than to convert the heretics, and the theological disputes went on. The sober inquiries of recent times have interfered very much with the beauty of the ancient legends. Heroes and kings are reduced to very small dimensions; the impossible grows improbable, whereas it was at one time the greatest test of truth; and even the improbable is looked on with suspicion, if any other method can be detected of arriving at the same results. The narrative of the invitation to the Saxons, as it is called would be very simple if it rested only on the real facts of the case.[n]

THE THREE TRIBES OF GERMANY

The "three tribes of Germany"—the Jutes, the Angles, and the Saxons, by whom Britain was subdued, seem originally to have constituted but one nation, speaking the same language, and ruled by monarchs who all claimed their descent from the deified monarch of the Teutons, Woden or Odin. They frequently changed their position on the firm land of Europe, as the stream of population rolled forward, impelled by the secondary causes, prepared and destined to act in fulfilment of the decree by which the enlargement of Japhet had been foretold.

The Jutes, together with their neighbours the Angles, dwelt in the peninsula of Jutland, or the "Cimbric Chersonesus," and in the adjoining Holstein, where there is still a district called Anglen. That, in fact, is the real Old England. The Saxons were more widely dispersed. Ptolemy places them in the Cimbric Chersonesus, near the Jutes and Angles; but they afterwards occupied a much larger extent, from the delta of the Rhine to the Weser. After the migration of the Saxons to Britain, the name of Old Saxons was given to the parent stock. One very large body of Saxon population occupied the present Westphalia; but the tribes by whom Britain was invaded, appear principally to have proceeded from the country now called Friesland; for of all the Continental dialects, the ancient Frisick is the one which approaches most nearly to the Anglo-Saxon of our ancestors. It is necessary, however, to remark that the name "Saxon" appears rather to have been intended to denote a confederacy of tribes, than to have originally belonged to any one nation. Learned men have sought for the etymology of the term in the *seax* or short sword, a weapon with which they were armed. These and other suppositions are, however, after all, only ingenious sports and fancies. We possess but a very small number of authentic facts concerning the early history of the barbarian nations of the west; and, though the general outline of their position upon the ethnographical map can be understood with tolerable precision, yet we must be always uncertain concerning the details.[d]

It is almost exclusively from Roman writers that we gain our information about the institutions and usages of our Saxon ancestors in their primeval fatherland. Caution must be used in admitting and applying to them the details which we read in Cæsar and Tacitus respecting the manners and institutions of the Germans. But we may gain thence some general knowledge which may be safely relied on, especially when taken in connection with what we know of the Anglo-Saxons at a later period. Our German ancestors were freemen, having kings with limited authority, who were selected from certain families. Besides these kings, they had chieftains whom they freely chose among themselves for each warlike enterprise or emergency. All important state affairs were discussed at general assemblies of the people, matters of minor consequence being dealt with by the chief magistrates alone. Any person might be impeached and tried for his life at the chief popular assembly. The head men, or magistrates, who were to preside in the local courts, were also elected at popular assemblies; and the organisation of the men of each district into hundreds, for the purposes of local self-government and for being joint securities for the good behaviour of each other, appears also to have existed among them. They had no cities or walled towns, but they had villages, where each man dwelt in his own homestead. It is very important to mark this; and to observe that the ancient Germans were equally distinguished from the classic Greeks and Romans, who were essentially dwellers

in cities, and from the wandering tribes in Central Asia, who have ever been dwellers in tents, without settled home or habitation. The love of individual liberty, the spirit of personal independence, which characterised the German warrior, as contrasted with the classic citizen, to whom the state was all and the individual nothing, were perfectly compatible with a respect for order, and a capacity for becoming the member of a permanent and civilised community, such as never existed in the Scythian of antiquity or the Tatar of modern times.

Slavery existed among the ancient Germans, but it was generally of a very mitigated kind. They had few domestic slaves, like those of the classical nations, and the term "serf" would more accurately describe the German *servus* whom Tacitus speaks of. The serf had his own home and his land, part of the produce of which he was bound to render to his master; that was the extent of his servitude; but he was destitute of all political rights. Military valour was the common virtue of the nations of the north. The Germans possessed this, but they had also peculiar merits. The domestic virtues flourished nowhere more than in a German home. Polygamy was almost entirely unknown among them, and infanticide was looked on with the utmost horror. The great ethnologist, Pritchard,[w] in his survey of the different races of mankind, truly observes that "In two remarkable traits the Germans differed from the Sarmatic as well as from the Slavic nations, and, indeed, from all those other races to whom the Greeks and Romans gave the designation of barbarians. I allude to their personal freedom and regard to the rights of men; secondly, to the respect paid by them to the female sex, and the chastity for which the latter were celebrated among the people of the north. These were the foundations of that probity of character, self-respect, and purity of manners, which may be traced among the Germans and Goths even during pagan times, and which, when their sentiments were enlightened by Christianity, brought out those splendid traits of character which distinguished the age of chivalry and romance."

Much indeed of the spirit of chivalry, and even the germs of some of its peculiar institutions, may be found in the customs of our Germanic ancestors as they are described by Tacitus. The young warrior was solemnly invested with the dignity of arms by some chief of eminence; and the most aspiring and adventurous youths were wont to attach themselves as retainers to some renowned leader, whose person they protected in war, and whose state they upheld in peace. (*In pace decus, in bello præsidium.*) These were the "gesithas" of the Anglo-Saxons; they fed at the chief's table, they looked to him for gifts of war-horses or weapons, as rewards for deeds of distinguished valour. Their relation to him was that of fealty; and we may see here a species of feudalism, with the all-important exception that the relation between retainer and chief had no necessary connection with the tenure of any land.[e]

In the infancy of their naval power the Saxon boats resembled those of the other northern tribes; and a few planks, surmounted with works of osier, and covered with skins, bore the fearless barbarian across the ocean in the search of spoil and adventures. But in the fifth century, their *chiules* or warships had assumed a more formidable appearance: and from the number of warriors whom they carried, and the length of the voyages which they made, we may conclude that they were formed of more solid and lasting materials. In these the Saxons repeatedly issued from their ports, sometimes steering for a particular point, sometimes trusting entirely to the guidance of the winds: but whether they were conducted by chance or design, their object was invariably the same—to surprise and pillage the unoffending inhabitants

[449 A.D.]

on some part of the British or Gallic coasts. Sidonius,[m] the eloquent bishop of Clermont, has described in animated language the terrors of the provincials and the ravages of the barbarians. "We have not," he says, "a more cruel and more dangerous enemy than the Saxons. They overcome all who have the courage to oppose them. They surprise all who are so imprudent as not to be prepared for their attack. When they pursue, they infallibly overtake: when they are pursued, their escape is certain. They despise danger: they are inured to shipwreck: they are eager to purchase booty with the peril of their lives. Tempests, which to others are so dreadful, to them are subjects of joy. The storm is their protection when they are pressed by the enemy, and a cover for their operations when they meditate an attack. Before they quit their own shores, they devote to the altars of their gods the tenth part of the principal captives: and when they are on the point of returning, the lots are cast with an affectation of equity, and the impious vow is fulfilled."

THE COMING OF THE SAXONS

Such was the terror of the Saxon name, when Hengist and Horsa,[1] in 449, were invited by Vortigern to fight his battles. For six years they served him with fidelity. The Picts were taught to respect, the Britons were eager to reward, their valour. Hengist, whether he had already formed designs of conquest, or was desirous of rendering greater service to his employers, obtained permission to solicit reinforcements from his own country. The messengers whom he sent, were received with welcome: chieftain after chieftain led his followers to Thanet; and the isle was crowded with strangers, till their number became an object of jealous apprehension to the Britons. An increased supply of provisions was demanded; and the refusal was to both parties the signal for war. The Jutes marched to the Medway (455 A.D.), and at Aylesford were opposed by the natives. The passage of the river was fiercely disputed; Vortigern lost a son, and Hengist his brother: but the issue appears to have been favourable to the strangers. After the death of Horsa, Æsc, the son of Hengist, was associated with his father in the command, and a second battle was fought more to the west, on the banks of the Cray. It proved most disastrous to the Britons. Four of their leaders were left on the field; their troops fled with precipitation to London: and Kent was abandoned to the possession of the invaders.[b]

After the victory at Crayford (Creccanford), however, the tide seems to have turned against Hengist and his followers, and the succeeding years saw the Britons reassert themselves and drive the Jutish conquerors back from the ground they had won, till they occupied only the Isle of Thanet. There,

[1 Even if we accept Hengist and Horsa as historical characters, we may still entertain widely differing theories of the circumstances which led to their coming to England. Of the ancient authorities Bede, following Gildas, tells the story of the invitation by Vortigern. Nennius[e] says that they were roving exiles. Palgrave[d] accepts this explanation as the more probable, and thinks that the first landing was the result of a piratical expedition such as had often harassed Britain during the later Roman occupation. He believes that it bears "no nearer relation to the real history of England than the story of Æneas, as related by Virgil,[x] does to the real history of the foundation of Rome." Kemble,[c] summing up the evidence, finds only that "it is certain that at that period there took place an extensive migration to the shores of England," and adds that "the expeditions known to tradition as those of Hengist, Ælla, Cissa, Cerdic, and Port may therefore have some foundation in fact." Ramsay,[f] one of the most recent investigators in the field, touches the real point of weakness in the "invitation story" in remarking that "It seems hardly necessary to point out that if these men had been imported for service against northern enemies they would not have been quartered in Thanet."]

for the space of eight years or more, they remained practically prisoners, although the Britons wisely desisted from any attempt to dislodge them from their island stronghold. Just what caused this temporary check to the advance of the Jutes it is difficult to say. Perhaps the comparatively small number of Hengist's followers made it seem unwise to push much farther from the seaboard. Perhaps, as seems to be suggested by the early chroniclers, a revolution among the Britons themselves had placed a stronger leader than Vortigern at the head of their hosts, who had infused into them a new spirit of resistance. At any rate, this is the period to which tradition ascribes the ascendency of Ambrosius Aurelianus, said to have been a descendant of Constantine, the private soldier, whom the legions in Britain had hailed emperor in the early days of the same century. Ambrosius appears to have overthrown Vortigern, and he it probably was who drove the conquering Jutes back to Thanet. The success of the Britons was not lasting. In 465 A.D. Hengist, reinforced, no doubt, by new bands from the Continent, advanced again towards the west, and Ambrosius marshalled all his strength to meet the onset. The hostile armies met at Wippdesfleet, where in a bloody battle Hengist won a decisive victory. The defence of the Britons was evidently gallant and stubborn, but was of little avail before the onslaught of Hengist's fierce warriors, of whom the chronicle tells us that "there twelve Wealish Ealdormen they slew." Kent fell into the hands of Hengist without further conflict, and the conquerors began their advance along the southern shore.[a]

The last victory of Hengist was obtained in 473 A.D. The Britons are said to have fled from their enemies as "from a devouring conflagration," and to have left behind them spoils of incalculable value. The conqueror survived fifteen years, and dying in 488 A.D. left the peacable possession of Kent to his son Æsc.

A very different tale [of the beginnings of the conquest] is told by the British writers, whose vanity has attributed the loss of Kent to the infatuation of Vortigern and the treacherous policy of Hengist. That chieftain, if we may credit their relation, had a daughter, Rowena, of transcendant beauty. It was so contrived, that at a banquet given to the British nobles, she waited on Vortigern, who was captivated by her charms, took her to his bed, and bestowed on his father-in-law the kingdom of Kent. But his attachment to the Jutes deprived him of the affections of the Britons. His son Vortemir was placed on the throne, fought three battles with the strangers, and ultimately expelled them from Kent. During five years Hengist wandered an adventurer on the ocean: but at the death of Vortemir the father recovered his crown, and the son-in-law demanded the restoration of the possessions which he had lost. Three hundred deputies from each nation assembled in council to determine the question: but during the conference each Saxon singled out his victim: at the proper moment Hengist exclaimed, "Draw your daggers:" and the ground was covered with the dead bodies of two hundred and ninety-nine Britons.[1] The one who had been spared was Vortigern himself: and to free from captivity a prince whom they hated, the natives yielded to Hengist the territory which has since been divided into the counties of Kent, Essex, Sussex, and Middlesex. Can it be necessary to say that many of these pretended events are contradicted by undeniable evidence, and that

[1 The strongest proof of the legendary character of many of these stories of early English history is found in their unmistakable identification with similar stories in the early history of other lands and peoples. Kemble,[c] for instance, points out that the story of the treacherous murder of the British chieftains at Hengist's feast is not of English origin, but is related on the Continent in connection with the conquest of the Thuringians.]

all escaped the notice of Gildas, a British, and almost a contemporary, writer? The whole appears to be a fable invented by the natives, to account for the first settlement of the Saxons without the admission of conquest.

Hengist and his successors were content with the possession of Kent. On the north, east, and south, their small domain was protected by the Thames and the sea; on the west they were removed from the hostility of the natives by the interposition of a new band of adventurers, under the command of Ælla and his three sons. In 477 A.D. these marauders landed at Keynor (Cymensore), near Withering, in the Isle of Selsea. The Britons made an obstinate resistance, but were defeated with considerable loss, and compelled to shelter themselves in the Andred's weald, a forest of one hundred and twenty miles in length and thirty in breadth. The progress of Ælla was slow. In 485 A.D. he fought a great battle (at Meareredsburn), the result of which is unknown: and it was not till 490 A.D. that he could penetrate as far as the city of Anderida [near the modern Pevensey], which gave its name to the tract, and was deemed an impregnable fortress. Its fate is celebrated in our annals. While the Saxons besieged the city, they were besieged in their turn by a numerous army of Britons, who allowed them no rest either by day or night. As often as they began the assault, the natives attacked them in the rear: and if they turned on the assailants, these immediately found an asylum in the woods, from which they issued again the moment that the Saxons moved to their former position. This harassing species of warfare suggested to the barbarian the obvious expedient of dividing his force into two armies: of which one conducted the siege, while the other watched the motions of the enemy without the walls. At last the Saxons forced their way into the place; Anderida was reduced to ashes; and every inhabitant was put to the sword (491 A.D.). This conquest secured to Ælla the possession of his former acquisitions, and he became the founder of the kingdom of Sussex, or of the South Saxons.

Five years after the destruction of Anderida a more powerful armament of five chiules appeared in the channel. This was under the command of Cerdic, who, sailing past the previous conquests of his countrymen, landed more to the west, at a place which, from the circumstance, received the name of Cerdices-ore. Natanleod, the king of the district, opposed the foreigners with intrepidity and perseverance; and Cerdic was repeatedly compelled to solicit the co-operation of other adventurers. In 501 A.D., Port, with two chiules, arrived at Portsmouth, and slew a British prince who opposed his landing. Still Natanleod retarded the advance of the invaders; and in 508 A.D. he routed Cerdic, but was attacked during the pursuit by Cynric, and perished in the field with five thousand Britons. Even this important victory did not give to the Saxon quiet possession of the country. In 514 A.D. he received a great accession of strength by the arrival of his nephews Stuf and Wihtgar with three chiules at Cerdices-ore: repeated victories gradually extended the conquests of the strangers; and in 519 A.D. the great battle of Charford on the Avon finally established the kingdom of Wessex, or of the West Saxons. Cerdic, having associated his son Cynric in the regal dignity, and bestowed upon his nephews the subordinate sovereignty of the Isle of Wight, died in 534 A.D. His was the kingdom of the West Saxons [Gewissas].

The success of these adventurers had given a new direction to the policy of the Saxons. Their object, which had formerly been plunder, was now converted into that of colonisation. In pursuit of new settlements in a more opulent country and under a more genial sun, the most enterprising chieftains abandoned their homes, and were followed by numbers anxious to share their fortunes. There was no part of the eastern shore, from the Firth of Forth

to the mouth of the Thames, which was not visited by hordes of barbarians. While Cerdic was struggling with the southern Britons, several independent chieftains had pushed their conquests along the left bank of the Thames.[b]

More meagre even than our knowledge of the conquests of the Jutes and the South Saxons is the record of the advance which resulted at length in the establishment of the kingdom of the East Saxons (Essex). From the estuaries of the Thames and up the valleys of the Colne, the Chelm, and the

SAXON KING INSTRUCTING OFFICER

Stour, the Saxon chieftains pushed their conquests into the interior. The old Roman town of Camulodunum (Colchester) fell before them, but of their varying fortunes we know almost nothing. By 530 A.D., however, the chroniclers tell us, the bands had been united into a single federation or kingdom under Æscwine or Ercenwine.

The districts in which the Jutes and Saxons made their early conquests were cut off by forests, hills, or rivers from free communication with the interior. To this condition we must attribute the fact that for a hundred years after their first landing they were unable to extend their sovereignty over a wider area. But to the north of the Stour no such barrier kept back the tribes which had secured a foothold during this same period along the eastern coast from the Wash to the Firth of Forth. The people who had settled at different times along this great stretch of shore washed by the waters of the North Sea, and who were destined to play a far greater part in the conquest of the island than their southern neighbours, and eventually to give their name to the land which they conquered, were neither Saxons nor Jutes. They were Angles (Angli) or Engles, and their continental homes modern research seems to have fixed with reasonable certainty in the neighbourhood of Magdeburg in the valley of the middle Elbe, in Lower Hanover and Oldenburg, and at a later period in parts of what is now Schleswig-Holstein and the peninsula of Jutland. Unlike the Saxons, only a small part of whom crossed to Britain, the Angles seem to have emigrated in a body. The greater vigour of their conquests was very likely due in great part to the fact that they were less

inspired by the love of fighting and plunder, than by the desire to establish new homes for their wives and children.[a]

The majority of the Angles had spread themselves more to the northward. Ida, who commanded a fleet of forty chiules, after many severe conflicts, succeeded in removing the Bernician Britons from the vicinity of the coast; and fixed his residence at Bamborough (Bebbanburh), a castle which he had built on a lofty promontory, and to which he had given that name in honour of his consort Bebba. He obtained the regal title in 547 A.D., and reigned twelve years. His states, from their British name Berneich, were called the kingdom of Bernicia, and were bounded on the south by the river Tyne or the Tees.

The Britons who lived on the right banks of those rivers were called Deiri, from Deyfyr. The first of the Anglian chieftains, by whom they had been assailed and defeated, was Soemil. Ælla, one of his descendants, in 560 A.D. obtained the undisputed possession of the country, and formed a new kingdom, which preserved its British appellation.[1]

The Angles of Deira stretched themselves as far as the Humber. In 586 A.D. a colony under the command of Creoda passed that river, and after clearing the coast of the Britons, pushed their conquest behind the East Angles, till they had reached the very centre of the island. They were in general called Mercians,[2] perhaps from the marshy district in which they first settled; but some of them took the name of Middle Angles from their central position.

From the arrival of Hengist to the last successes of Creoda a period had intervened of more than one hundred and fifty years. The natives had gradually retired before their enemies from the coast to the mountains, and had left about one-half of the southern division of the island in the possession of the invaders. Eight new kingdoms had been formed. Kent and Sussex were comprised within the small extent of the counties still known by those names. The East Saxons possessed Essex, Middlesex, and the south of Hertfordshire. East Anglia comprehended Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridge, and the Isle of Ely. These states were prevented from extending their territories by their position on the coast, and the contiguity of other Saxon adventurers. But the remaining kingdoms bordered on the Britons, and were successively augmented by conquest. When they had attained their full growth, Bernicia on the north, and Deira on the south, of the Tees, extended from the Forth to the Humber, and from the eastern sea to the western. Wessex was bounded by the Thames and the Severn on the north, and stretched from the borders of Kent and Sussex to the Land's End in Cornwall. Mercia comprised all the interior of the island as far as the mountains of Wales. It is easy to point out the continental origin of these different peoples. The nations of the Saxons discover themselves by their very name. The conquerors of Kent, of the Isle of Wight, and the coast of Hampshire opposite to that island were Jutes. All the remaining kingdoms were founded by the Angles.

During this long and eventful period, the Britons, though finally unsuccessful, had displayed a considerable share of courage and resolution.[3]

[1] When Bernicia was afterwards united with Deira under one sovereign, the whole was called the kingdom of Northumbria, from its comprising the Saxon conquests north of the Humber.

[2] A more generally accepted derivation of the name Mercia, is that it was the same as the name March or Mark, meaning border-land.]

[3] The theory of Kemble,[c] which has many adherents, is quite contrary to that here expressed. He disbelieves that there was a long and doubtful struggle between the Britons and the Saxon invaders. "It is no doubt probable that the whole land was not subdued without some

[*ca.* 520 A.D.]

If during the struggle they lost the fairer portion of the island, the origin of their misfortunes will be found in the want of union among their chieftains. Like their fathers of old, they were vanquished in detail. Their national writers talk of kings who at this period wielded the whole power of Britain: but of the existence of any such authority no trace can be discovered in genuine history. The population of the country was divided among a multitude of chieftains, whose crimes and dissensions had rendered them too attentive to objects of personal jealousy or aggrandisement, to act with any combined effort against the common enemy. The chief opposition made to the Saxons seems to have proceeded from the inhabitants of the places in which they successively landed.[b]

THE REAL KING ARTHUR

In the stream of bloody deeds that marks the story of the Saxon conquest one stands out in the imagination from all the rest, not because of its inherent importance, but because it afforded the foundation or the point of departure for the story which of all others in English history has been most often told and has most powerfully affected the historical imagination—the story of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. When the imagination has had a sway so nearly limitless it is especially interesting to discover the original facts. These are best presented in Ramsay's[f] *Foundation of England.*[a]

The name of Arthur is not to be found in Gildas,[i] who wrote only forty-four years after the siege of the Mons Badonicus. As he gives the names of several native princes it seems clear that there was no leading native of that name known to him. If we search for the oldest historic record of an Arthur we find it among the Gael, in the person of a Dalriad prince, in Latin "Arturius," son of Aidan, killed in battle by the heathen Picts, 591 A.D. We also have an Arthur map Petr, and more clearly a Noe son of Arthur, ruling in Dyfed (Pembrokeshire), 600–660 A.D. The name therefore was not unknown in Great Britain. But neither of these men can serve as basis for the legendary Arthur. For him we have to skip on one hundred and fifty years to the pages of Nennius,[g] who wrote in the ninth century, and there we have the Arthurian legend in full bloom. He is represented not as being a British king, or even a Briton at all, but as a heroic personage who fought for them against the Saxons and led their armies. He fights twelve battles—a suspicious number—and apparently wins them all; the last being that "*in monte Badonis,*" the victory of the historic Ambrosius.

If we turn to the old Bardic poems of Wales, we find in them no allusion to these battles. The name Arthur, however, does occur in four of the poems, for which a historic character is claimed by Mr. W. F. Skene.[t] But the only one that couples him with a personage that can be identified couples him with Geraint ap Erbin of Dyfnaint; apparently the Geraint who is defeated by Ine of Wessex in 710 A.D., two centuries after the time of the Arthur of Nennius. Another poem talks of fighting on the Wall, "the ancient boundary," and of the "loricated legion"; thus relegating its Arthur to the times of the Roman dominion.

The theory that commends itself to us is that the Arthurian legend is merely a reissue of Ossianic myths, brought over by the Dalriad Scots, dis-

pains in different quarters," he writes. "But a skirmish, carried on by very small numbers on either side, seems generally to have decided the fate of a campaign."]

[550–568 A.D.]

seminated through the agency of the Columban missionaries, and appropriated and adopted by the Celtic people of Great Britain. This will account for the localisation of the legendary Arthur in North Britain; because the north was the chief scene of the labours of the Irish clergy; and the deficiency of Arthurian traditions in Wales will be due to the fact that the Irish missionaries gained no footing there.[j]

THE EIGHT KINGDOMS

By the conquests of the Saxons the island was replunged into that state of barbarism from which it had been extricated by the Romans. The victors had long been inured to pillage and slaughter. On many occasions the towns and villages were with their inhabitants involved in the same ruin. A mighty conflagration, says Gildas,[i] was lighted up by the barbarians on the eastern coast, which gradually devoured the whole surface of the island. To escape from the exterminating sword of their enemies, the natives, as soon as opposition appeared fruitless, fled with their most valuable effects to the hills and forests. Multitudes found a secure asylum among the mountains which cover the west of the island: where, struggling with poverty, and engaged in constant warfare, they rapidly lost the faint polish of provincial civilisation, and relapsed into many of the habits of savage life. But the work of devastation was checked by views of personal interest. The habitations of the Britons were wanted for the use of the conquerors; and the labours of the captives were found necessary for the cultivation of the soil. Hence it was that, as the Saxons extended their conquests, the buildings were suffered to stand; and the lives of the Britons who fell into their hands were spared, unless the thirst of vengeance had been excited by the obstinacy of their resistance. The captives were divided, together with the land, among the conquerors: they became the property, the chattels, of their lord, subject to his caprice, and transferable at his will. The same fate attended their descendants for many generations: and from the authentic record of Doomsday it appears that as late as the eleventh century a great part of the population of England remained in a state of serfhood.

The conquerors had established eight independent kingdoms in the island, though from the frequent union of Bernicia and Deira under the same head, they have generally been considered as only seven. The history of their different dynasties, were they to be arranged either collaterally or in succession, would perplex and fatigue both the writer and the reader. A sufficiently accurate notion of the period which precedes the preponderance of the West Saxon kings may be obtained by attending to the reigns of the more powerful monarchs; for there frequently was one among the number whose authority was acknowledged by all or by most of his contemporaries. The title by which he was designated was [according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*] that of Bretwalda, the wielder or sovereign of Britain.[1]

Æthelberht, the fourth king of Kent, was the first to disturb the harmony which had united the Saxon princes. In 568 A.D. he led an army against

[1 The theory that Bretwalda was a regular title, recognised as denoting the possession by its holder of certain designated powers and privileges, was held by many historical writers of the early nineteenth century. Later writers have generally discarded the theory. The source upon which this idea of the title was based, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*,[k] is not contemporaneous, and as Stubbs,[o] the highest authority on the subject, says, "It is most probable that the superiority was one of power and influence only; but it may have been recognised by occasional acts of commendation by which the weaker sovereign placed himself under the protection of the stronger."]

Ceawlin, king of Wessex, the grandson of Cerdic. At Wimbledon (Wibbandún) his temerity was severely chastised. Oslac and Cnebba, his two ealdormen, fell in the conflict, and Æthelberht himself escaped with difficulty from the pursuit of the enemy. Ceawlin, content with the humiliation of the king of Kent, directed his arms against the Britons. The battle of Bedford (571 A.D.), which was fought under the direction of his brother Cutha or Cuthwin, added to his dominions the towns of Leighton, Ailesbury, Bensington, and Eynsham: and six years afterwards the victory of Deorham (577 A.D.) in Gloucestershire was marked by the fall of three British kings, Conmail, Condidan, and Farinmail, and was followed by the surrender of the important cities of Gloucester, Cirencester, and Bath.[b] The victory at Deorham was decisive, and its results were far-reaching. Its great significance lay in the fact that by giving the Saxons command of the mouth of the Severn, and control of its fertile valley, the Britons of Cornwall were forever cut off from communication with their countrymen in Wales. With the possibility of common action in defence of their land gone, their subjugation became an easier task for the Saxon conquerors.[a] When Ceawlin had settled his new conquests, he resumed offensive operations against the Britons. At Frithern, on the left bank of the Severn, he lost his son Cutha: but victory declared for the Saxons, the neighbouring towns were plundered, and the army returned home laden with booty. A few years afterwards, on the death of Cissa, the son of Ælla, Ceawlin added Sussex to his other dominions. But fortune deserted him in the zenith of his power. His own subjects rose in arms against him; Angles and Britons hastened to assist them; and, after a bloody battle at Wodnesbeorh, the king was driven from his throne. He died in 593 A.D., and was succeeded by his nephew Ceolric.

The Reign of Æthelberht of Kent

The disgrace which had clouded the first years of Æthelberht, king of Kent, was afterwards dispersed by the glory of a long and prosperous reign. At the death of Ceawlin his authority was admitted by all the Saxon princes south of the Humber. While he was in possession of this power, he received intelligence that forty strangers had landed on the Isle of Thanet. These were Augustine and his associates, partly Gauls, partly Italians, whom Pope Gregory the Great had sent for the benevolent purpose of converting the pagans.[b]

Pope Gregory had become much interested in the welfare of the Anglo-Saxons, in consequence of an incident which happened to him at an earlier period of his life. It chanced that he passed through the market at Rome (about 588 A.D.), where certain dealers had just arrived from foreign parts with various kinds of merchandise. Amongst other articles, there were slaves for sale, like cattle. Gregory was particularly interested by the appearance of some poor little lads, who stood trembling in the expectation of being consigned to a new master. They were beautiful children, with ruddy cheeks and blue eyes, and their fine yellow tresses flowing in long curls upon their shoulders.

"To what nation do these poor boys belong?" was the question which Gregory asked of the dealer. "They are Angles, father." "Well may they be so called, for they are as comely as angels; and would that, like angels, they might become cherubim in heaven! But from which of the many provinces of Britain do they come?" "From *Deira*, father." "Indeed," continued Gregory, speaking in Latin, "*De irâ Dei liberandi sunt*" (From

[596–597 A.D.]

the wrath of God they are to be delivered). And when, on asking the name of their king, he was told it was Ælla, or Alla, he added, that *Allelujah*—praise ye the Lord—ought to be sung in his dominions. This conversation was destined to produce the most important effects. The state of Britain having been introduced to the notice of Gregory, he brooded over the thought, and determined to proceed thither in the character of a missionary. Impediments arose, which prevented him from carrying this design into effect, but the impression continued firm in his mind; and when he became pope of Rome he despatched Augustine to fulfil the task, the accomplishment of which he had so earnestly desired (596–601 A.D.).[d]

Æthelberht could not have been unacquainted with the Christian religion. It was probably the belief of the majority of the British slaves in his dominions: it was certainly professed by his queen, Bertha, the daughter of Charibert, king of Paris. The Saxon prince received the missionaries under an oak, in an open field, at the suggestion of his priests, who had told him that in such a situation the spells of the foreign magicians would lose their influence. At the appointed time, Augustine was introduced to the king. Before him were borne a silver cross, and a banner representing the Redeemer: behind him his companions walked in procession; and the air resounded with the anthems which they sang in alternate choirs. As soon as the interpreter had explained the object and motives of their mission, Æthelberht replied that he had no inclination to abandon the gods of his fathers for a new and uncertain worship: but as the intention of the strangers was benevolent, and their promises were inviting, they might preach without molestation, and should be supported at his expense. This favourable answer filled them with joy; and they proceeded to Canterbury. The care of the queen had already prepared a residence for the new apostles. They were lodged in the ancient church of St. Martin, which had originally belonged to the Britons, and had lately been repaired for the use of Liudhard, a Christian prelate who accompanied Bertha from Gaul. Curiosity led the Saxons to visit the strangers: they admired the ceremonies of their worship, compared their lives with those of the pagan priests, and learned to approve a religion which could inspire so much piety, austerity, and disinterestedness. With secret pleasure Æthelberht viewed the alteration in the sentiments of his subjects: on the feast of Pentecost, in the year 597 A.D., he professed himself a Christian, and received the sacrament of baptism; and on the following Christmas ten thousand of his subjects followed the example of their sovereign. As each canton embraced the new doctrine, the heathen temple was converted into a Christian church; and, in order to wean the proselytes from their idolatrous practices, they were permitted, instead of the feasts which they had formerly celebrated around the altars of their gods, to assemble upon the more solemn festivals in the neighbourhood of the church, and to partake of a sober repast. The kingdom of Essex was, at this period, governed by Sæberht, the son of its founder, and the nephew of Æthelberht. The influence of the uncle introduced a missionary, the abbot Mellitus, to the notice of Sæberht, who soon consented to receive the sacrament of baptism.[b]

THE RELIGION OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS

The heathendom which Gregory ardently desired to overthrow had taken a very deep root in the country before the arrival of the Christian missionaries. Woden was the Mercury of the Saxons. William of Malmesbury,[p] speaking

of the pretensions of Hengist and Horsa to be descended from him, says: "They were great-grandsons of the most ancient Woden, from whom almost all the royal families of these barbarous nations deduce their origin; and to whom the nations of the Angles, fondly deifying him, have consecrated the fourth day of the week, and the sixth day unto his wife Frea, by a sacrilege which lasts even unto this day." To him were human victims sacrificed. That his worship was universally spread in England is shown, according to Mr. Kemble,[c] by the extreme frequency of names of places compounded with his name. Thus, the ancient fortification Wansdike is Woden's dike. Thor, the thunderer, the god of storms and rains, wielding his terrible hammer, was the Saxon Jupiter, as Tiw was their Mars. Frea, according to Mr. Kemble, was a god, and Woden's wife was Fricge. There were lesser gods—Baldr, and Geat, and Sætere, or Saturn. Goddesses were numerous. Eastre survives in the great festival of the Church. Their mythology included Fiends, and Monsters, and Fates. "The weird sisters" of Macbeth comes from the Wyrd, who weave the web of destiny. There was hero-worship, too, in which the rude but imaginative man recognised some great attribute of courage or goodness, which he exalted into a power below his divinities, but calling for his habitual reverence. Perhaps we have been too much accustomed to look only at the revolting aspect of these superstitions; and not to see in them that, however debasing in some essentials, they were manifestations of a spirit which did not walk in the material world without believing in some presiding influences which governed human actions. In this rude mythology we see glimpses of a belief in a future life, and of a state of rewards and punishments. That the mythology of the nations who overran England in the fifth and sixth centuries, and swept away whatever remained of Roman rites, with all that had been created of Christian worship, was a great dominant principle in the life of the people, admits of little question. But, at the same time, it possessed some capacity of assimilation with that faith before which the classical paganism of the ancient world had retreated. Mr. Kemble points out the pregnant fact in the history of our Anglo-Saxon progenitors, at the commencement of the sixth century, "that Christianity met but little resistance among them, and enjoyed an easy triumph, or, at the worst, a careless acquiescence, even among those whose pagan sympathies could not be totally overcome."[l]

From the conversion of the Saxons the zeal of Augustine was directed to the reformation of the Britons. During one hundred and fifty years of unsuccessful warfare, the ancient discipline of their church had been nearly abolished, and the lives of their clergy were disgraced by vices the most repugnant to their profession. Gregory had written to Augustine, that he had subjected all the bishops of Britain to his authority. The missionary, with the aid of Æthelberht, prevailed on the British prelates to meet him at a place, which has since been called Augustine's oak, in Worcestershire. After a long and unavailing debate, the conference was adjourned to another day. In the interval the Britons consulted a neighbouring hermit, who advised them to watch the conduct of Augustine; if he arose to meet them, they were to consider him as a man of unassuming disposition, and to listen to his demands; but if he kept his seat, they should condemn him of pride, and reject his authority. With this sapient admonition, which left to accident the decision of the controversy, seven bishops, with Dinoth, abbot of Bangor, repaired to the place of conference. Augustine happened to be seated, and did not rise at their arrival. Both his reasons and his authority were consequently despised. In points of doctrine there had been no difference

ST. AUGUSTINE BEFORE ÆTHELBERHT

(From the engraving by A. Smith of the painting by H. Tresham, R.A.)

between them, and to facilitate their compliance in other matters, the archbishop had reduced his demands to three heads: that they should observe the Catholic computation of Easter, should adopt the Roman rite in the administration of baptism, and should join with the missionaries in preaching to the Saxons.[1] Each of these requests, in obedience to the advice of the hermit, was pertinaciously refused. "Know then," exclaimed the missionary with the tone of a prophet, "that if you will not assist me in pointing out to the Saxons the way of life, they, by the just judgment of God, will prove to you the ministers of death." He did not live to see the prediction verified.

THE LAWS OF ÆTHELBERHT

The reign of Æthelberht lasted fifty-six years. Before his death he published a code of laws to regulate the administration of justice. For this improvement he was indebted to the suggestions of the missionaries, who, though they had been accustomed to the forms and decisions of Roman jurisprudence, did not, in legislating for the Saxons, attempt to abolish the national notions of equity, but wisely retained the principle of pecuniary compensation, a principle universally prevalent in the northern nations. Those crimes which appeared the most repugnant to the well-being of society were scrupulously enumerated; theft in its different branches, murder, sacrilege, insults offered to female chastity, and infractions of the peace of the king and of the church: and to each was attached a proportionate fine, which rose in amount according to the dignity of the person against whom the offence was committed. From these laws it appears that all freemen were classed according to their property, and the offices which they held. To each class was allotted its peculiar *mund* and *were*. The *mund* was the pecuniary mulct, which was intended to provide for the security of each individual, and of those under his roof. Thus the *mund* of a widow, if she were of the highest rank, was fifty shillings; of the second, twenty; of the third, twelve; and of the fourth, six. The *were* was the sum at which the life of each person was rated. If he was killed, the murderer paid it as a compensation to his family; if he himself transgressed the laws, he forfeited it, in lieu of his head, to the king. But murder was not only an offence against individuals, it was also considered as an injury to the community, and the criminal was compelled to make what was esteemed a compensation to the violated justice of his country as well as to the family of the deceased. For this purpose, besides the *were*, he paid an additional fine, called the *wite*, which was received by the king or the chief magistrate of the district. The same distinctions, and the same punishments, with a few variations arising out of times and circumstances, were retained in all the laws of succeeding legislators.

EADBALD

Æthelberht died in 616 A.D. The crown devolved upon his son Eadbald, the violence of whose passions nearly replunged the nation into that idolatry

[1] It is surprising that so many modern historians should have represented the Britons as holding different doctrines from those professed by the Roman missionaries, though these writers have never yet produced a single instance of such difference. Would Augustine have required the British clergy to join in the conversion of the Saxons, if they had taught doctrines which he condemned? Bede has related with great minuteness all the controversies between the two parties. They all regard points of discipline. Nowhere does the remotest hint occur of any difference respecting doctrine.

from which it had just emerged. The youth and beauty of his step-mother, the relict of Æthelberht, induced him to take her to his bed; and when the missionaries admonished him to break the unnatural connection, he abandoned a religion which forbade the gratification of his appetite. At the same time the three sons of Sæberht [of Essex] (their father was dead) restored the altars of the gods, and banished from the territory the bishop Mellitus. With Justus of Rochester he retired into Gaul, and Laurentius, the successor of Augustine in the see of Canterbury, had determined to follow their footsteps. On the morning of his intended departure, he made a last attempt on the mind of Eadbald. His representations were successful. The king dismissed his step-mother, and recalled the fugitive prelates. The sincerity of his conversion was proved by his subsequent conduct, and Christianity, supported by his influence, assumed an ascendancy which it ever afterwards preserved.

RÆDWALD AND ÆTHELFRITH

The East-Anglian throne was now filled by Rædwald, one of the Uffingas. He had formerly paid a visit to Æthelberht, and at his persuasion had professed himself a Christian. But on his return home the new convert found himself assailed by the importunities of his wife, and the opposition of his people. His resolution was at last subdued, but to silence his conscience, he endeavoured to unite the two worships, and in the same temple, by the side of the statue of Woden, dedicated an altar to the god of the Christians. We cannot appreciate his subsequent conduct without reverting to the history of Northumbria. Æthelfrith, the grandson of Ida, was a restless and sanguinary prince, who for several years had directed all his efforts against the neighbouring Britons. In many districts they had been entirely exterminated by his arms; in others they were happy to purchase his forbearance by the payment of an annual tribute. Aidan, king of the Scots, jealous of so formidable a neighbour, assembled all his forces, and marched as far as the stone of Degsa, a spot long celebrated in the traditions of the country. Though Theodbald, the brother of Æthelfrith, was slain with his followers, victory declared for the Northumbrians. The greater part of the Scots were immolated to their vengeance; and the narrow escape of Aidan with a handful of attendants proved an instructive lesson to him and his successors. For more than a century no king of the Scots dared to meet the Northumbrians in battle.

At the death of Ælle, the founder of the kingdom of Deira, Æthelfrith, who had married his daughter, took possession of his dominions. Ælle had left a male child of the name of Eadwine (Edwin), who was conveyed beyond the reach of the tyrant, and intrusted to the protection of Cadvan, the king of North Wales. The hospitality of the British prince drew on him the vengeance of the Northumbrian; and the two armies met in the vicinity of Chester (613 A.D.). On the summit of a neighbouring hill Æthelfrith espied an unarmed crowd, the monks of Bangor, who, like Moses in the wilderness, had hoped by their prayers to determine the fate of the battle. "If they pray," exclaimed the pagan, "they fight against us;" and ordered a detachment of his army to put them to the sword. Victory was, as usual, true to his standard. Chester was taken and Bangor demolished. The number of the monks slain on the hill is generally said to have been twelve hundred; but Bede observes that others besides the monks had assembled to pray. He supposes that the victory of Æthelfrith fulfilled the predictions of Augustine.[b]

[*ca.* 600 A.D.]

The real significance of Æthelfrith's victory at Chester does not lie, however, in the number of the slain, but in the fact that it gave the Saxons a foothold on the western sea and thereby again divided the Welsh nation. The western coast from the Channel to the Clyde had been until shortly before this time entirely under Welsh control. If they could have presented a continuous line of defence to the Saxons the conquest of their country might have been at least retarded for some years. But they laboured under the disadvantage of having to defend a region which by its physical features was naturally divided by the Severn, the Dee and the Solway, into four distinct parts. By the battle of Deorham (577 A.D.) the West Saxons had reached the mouth of the Severn and thus split off the West Welsh from their kindred in Cornwall. In like manner the battle of Chester separated the Strathclyde and Cumbrian Welsh from the main body of their nation to the southward. "No general resistance of the Welsh people was henceforth possible," writes Green, "and the warfare of Britons against Englishmen died down into a warfare of separate English kingdoms against separate British kingdoms."[a]

The son of Ælle, who was incessantly harassed by the jealousy of Æthelfrith, wandered from the hospitable mansion of Cadvan through the different principalities of the Britons and Saxons. At last he found an asylum in the court of Rædwald. The fidelity of that prince was immediately tempted by the threats and promises of Æthelfrith; and after a long struggle he preferred the friendship of a powerful monarch to the danger of protecting a solitary exile. On the very evening while the council deliberated on his fate, Eadwine was sitting alone in the dark at the gate of the palace, when a friendly voice whispered in his ear that it was time to flee, for the king had given his assent to the demands of his enemy. "I have known too much misery," replied the prince, "to be anxious for life. If I must die, no death can be more acceptable than that which is inflicted by royal treachery." He remained in the same place musing on his melancholy situation, when his friend, stealing to him a second time, informed him that he was safe. The solicitations of the queen had overcome the perfidious resolve of her husband.

The moment Rædwald determined to reject the proposals of Æthelfrith, he saw the necessity of anticipating his resentment. The Northumbrian with a small body of followers was hastening to surprise his enemy, when he was met by the whole of the East-Anglian forces on the right bank of the Idle, in Nottinghamshire. They were skilfully (so we are told) arrayed in three bodies; and their helmets, spears, and banners gave them a martial and formidable appearance. Æthelfrith, though disconcerted, scorned to retire; and rushing on the first division, destroyed it with its leader, Rœgenhere or Rainer, the son of Rædwald. But the Northumbrians were quickly trampled under foot by the multitude of the East Anglians; and the king, having opened with his sword a way into the midst of his enemies, fell on the bodies of those whom he had slain. The conquerors hastened to improve their advantage. By the men of Deira Eadwine was received with acclamations of joy; the children of Æthelfrith fled into the north of the island; and the Bernicians submitted cheerfully to the good fortune of the son of Ælle. Rædwald, having placed his friend on the united throne of the two kingdoms, returned in triumph to his dominions.

The martial genius of Æthelfrith had raised Northumbria to an equality with the most powerful of the Anglo-Saxon states: under the government of Eadwine it assumed a marked superiority. The steps by which this pre-eminence [was achieved] are not recorded: but the history of his conversion to Christianity has been preserved by the pen of the venerable Bede.

THE SUPREMACY OF NORTHUMBRIA

In the ninth year of his reign Eadwine had married Æthelberga, the daughter of Æthelberht, the deceased king of Kent. Eadbald had previously stipulated that his sister should enjoy the free exercise of her religion. The queen was accompanied by Paulinus, a Roman missionary, who had lately received the episcopal consecration. The king faithfully observed his word: but, though he made no objection to the practice of Christianity by Æthelberga, he showed no inclination to embrace it himself. It was in vain that Paulinus preached; that the queen entreated; that Pope Boniface V sent letters and presents. Eadwine appeared immovably attached to the worship of his fathers.

The kingdom of Wessex was at this time governed by two princes, Cwichelm and Cynegils, the successors of Ceolwulf. They bore with impatience the superiority assumed by Eadwine; and, unable to contend with him in the field, attempted to remove him by assassination. Eomer, in quality of an envoy from Cwichelm, demanded an audience of Eadwine. He had concealed under his clothes a two-edged dagger, which had been previously dipped in poison; and while the king earnestly listened to his discourse, the assassin aimed a desperate stroke at his heart. His design did not escape the eye of the faithful Lilla, a thane, who threw himself between Eadwine and the dagger, and fell dead at the feet of his master. So great was the force of the stroke, that the king was wounded through the body of his attendant. Every sword was instantly drawn: but Eomer defended himself with such desperate courage, that he killed Frodheri, another thane, before he was overpowered.

The preceding night Æthelberga had been delivered of a daughter, and Eadwine publicly returned thanks to the gods for his own preservation and the health of his consort. Paulinus did not omit the opportunity of ascribing both events to the protection of Christ, whose resurrection from the grave had been that very day celebrated by the queen. His discourse made impression on the mind of the king, who permitted him to baptise his daughter, and promised to become a Christian, if he returned victorious from his meditated expedition against the perfidious king of Wessex.

At the head of a powerful army, Eadwine marched against his enemies. The two brothers were defeated; five of the West-Saxon chieftains fell in the battle; and the country was pillaged by the victors. Having satisfied his resentment, the king returned to Northumbria, and was reminded of his promise by Paulinus. From that moment he abstained from the worship of his gods, though he still hesitated to embrace Christianity. He consulted alternately his priests and the missionary, and revolved in solitude their opposite arguments. He called an assembly of his witan or counsellors, and required each to state his sentiments on the subject. The first who ventured to speak was Coifi, the high priest, who, instead of opposing, advised the adoption of the foreign worship. His motive was singular. No one, he said, had served the gods more assiduously than himself, and yet few had been less fortunate. He was weary of deities who were so indifferent or so ungrateful, and would willingly try his fortune under the new religion. To this profound theologian succeeded a thane, whose discourse exhibits a striking picture of national manners. "Often," said he, "O king, in the depth of winter, while you are feasting with your thanes, and the fire is blazing on the hearth in the midst of the hall, you have seen a bird, pelted by the storm, enter at one door, and escape at the other. During its passage it

was visible, but whence it came, or whither it went, you knew not. Such to me appears the life of man. He walks the earth for a few years, but what precedes his birth, or what is to follow after his death, we cannot tell. Undoubtedly, if the new religion can unfold these important secrets, it must be worthy our attention." At the common request Paulinus was introduced, and explained the principal doctrines of Christianity. Coifi declared himself a convert, and to prove his sincerity, offered to set fire to the neighbouring temple of Godmundingham. With the permission of Eadwine, he called for a horse and arms, both of which were forbidden to the priests of the Angles. As he rode along, he was followed by crowds, who attributed his conduct to temporary insanity. To their astonishment, bidding defiance to the gods of his fathers, he struck his spear into the wall of the temple. They had expected that the fires of heaven would have avenged the sacrilege. The impunity of the apostate dissipated their alarms, and urged by his example and exhortations they united in kindling the flames, which with the fane consumed the deities that had been so long the objects of their terror and veneration.

When Gregory the Great arranged the future economy of the Anglo-Saxon church, he directed that the northern metropolitan should fix his residence at York. Eadwine accordingly bestowed on Paulinus a house and possessions in that city, and was baptised in a church hastily erected for the ceremony. Pope Honorius was immediately informed of the event, and at his request granted the use of the pallium to the archbishops of Canterbury and York, with the permission, that when one of these prelates died, the survivor should consecrate his successor, without waiting to consult the Roman pontiff. At the death of Rædwald the thanes of East Anglia offered him the regal dignity, but he declined it in favour of Eorpwald, the son of Rædwald, who was slain after a short reign of three years.

The empire of Eadwine was more extensive than that of any preceding ruler in Britain. The islands of Anglesea and Man were subject to his authority, all the princes of the Britons paid him tribute. Among the Saxon kings, Eadbald of Kent retained a nominal independence, owing, not to his own power, but to the influence of his sister Æthelberga. As a token of his authority, the Northumbrian assumed a distinction unknown to the Saxons, and the "tufa," a military ensign of Roman origin, was always borne before him when he appeared in public. Anxious to enforce the observance of the laws, he severely punished every act of theft or rapacity, and the advantages resulting from his inflexible administration of justice were long preserved in the recollection of posterity by a proverb, the truth of which is attested by Bede: "That in the days of Eadwine a woman with a babe at her breast might have travelled over the island without suffering an insult." On the highways, at convenient intervals, he placed cisterns of stone to collect water from the nearest fountains, and attached to them cups of brass, for the refreshment of passengers; an improvement which in the seventh century excited applause and gratitude.

The Power of Penda

After the death of Cearl of Mercia (627 A.D.), Penda, the son of his predecessor, possessed the power, without the title, of king.[1] He was then advanced

[1] By the *Saxon Chronicle*, and most other writers, he is said to have begun his reign in 626 A.D., and to have reigned thirty years: but Bede expressly says that he reigned but twenty-two, which places the first year of his reign at the period of the battle of Hatfield.

in age, a brave and experienced warrior, and of insatiable ambition. For some years he bore with impatience the superiority of the Northumbrian: at last he found in Cadwallon, king of Gwynedd or North Wales, an associate of equal daring and of similar views. They united their armies, unfurled the standard of rebellion, and marched into Yorkshire. The battle was fought in Hatfield (Heathfelth) chase, between the Don and the Torre (633 A.D.). The Northumbrian army was routed; and Eadwine perished with a great part of his followers. Of his sons by his first wife, Quænburh, the daughter of Cearl, Osfrith was slain with his father, Eadfrith implored the protection of his relation Penda, and was afterwards murdered by him in violation of his oath. Æthelberga, with her children, and Paulinus, escaped by sea to the court of her brother in Kent. Having spread devastation from one end of the country to the other, the confederates separated. Cadwallon remained to accomplish his boast of utterly exterminating the Northumbrians; Penda marched with his Mercians into the territory of the East Angles. Sigebert, their king, had lately retired into a monastery, and had resigned the honours and cares of royalty to his cousin Egeric: but the East Angles were alarmed at the approaching danger, and clamorously demanded the aged monarch, who had so often led them to victory. With reluctance he left the tranquillity of his cell, to mix in the tumult of the combat. But arms were refused by the royal monk as repugnant to his profession, and he directed with a wand the operations of the army. The fortune of the Mercians prevailed; and both Sigebert and Egeric fell.

The unfortunate death of Eadwine dissolved for a short period the union of the Northumbrian kingdoms. Among the Deiri the family of Ælle retained the ascendancy; and the sceptre was placed in the hands, not indeed of the children of Eadwine, but of their cousin Osric, a prince mature in age and experienced in battle. In Bernicia the memory of Ida was still cherished with gratitude, and Eanfrith, the eldest of the sons of Æthelfrith, returning from his retreat in the mountains of Caledonia, ascended the throne of his ancestors. Each of these princes had formerly received baptism, and each with equal facility relapsed into the errors of paganism. If their ambition was satisfied with the possession of royalty, they quickly paid the price of it with their blood. Cadwallon still continued his ravages. He was in the city of York, when Osric, hastening to surprise him, was attacked unexpectedly himself, and perished on the spot. Eanfrith, terrified by the fate of Osric and the fame of Cadwallon, visited the Briton with only twelve attendants, solicited for peace, and was perfidiously put to death. The Northumbrians expunged the names of these apostate princes from the catalogue of their kings; and the time in which they reigned was distinguished in their annals by this expressive term—"the unhappy year."

Oswald

By the deaths of Osric and Eanfrith the duty of revenging his family and country devolved on Oswald, the younger of the sons of Æthelfrith (635 A.D.). Impelled by despair, he sought, with a small but resolute band, the army of the Britons, and at the dawn of day discovered them negligently encamped in the neighbourhood of Hexham. Oswald had not imitated the apostasy of his brother. By his orders a cross of wood was hastily formed, and fixed in the ground. At his command they knelt down to pray: from prayer they rose to battle; and victory was the reward of their piety and valour. Cadwallon was slain; and his invincible army was annihilated.[b]

The victory of Oswald at "Heaven's Field," as later chroniclers named the battle, was memorable as marking the culmination of the last effective rally the Britons ever made against the Saxon kingdoms.* With the fall of Cadwallon, the last great hero of the British to oppose the English advance, the strength of the Welsh seemed to be exhausted. Thenceforth their warfare was one of dogged, futile defence. To the English, also, the victory was fraught with great results. Oswald, with the blood of the rulers of Bernicia and Deira flowing through his veins, united the two Northumbrian kingdoms under his strong rule, and restored the realm of Eadwine to its former greatness. His earliest concern was to restore also the religion of Eadwine. He sent therefore an invitation to the Irish monks, among whom his younger days had been spent, to send missionaries into Northumbria. The first to respond, after a brief and unsuccessful mission returned to his brethren with the complaint that the Saxons were obstinate and barbarous. "Was it their stubbornness or your harshness?" asked Aidan, one of the monks who listened to him—"did you not forget God's command to give them the milk first, and the meat afterwards?" Aidan himself was thereupon selected by his companions to carry out the mission, which he did with great success. With Northumbria united and Christianity re-established, Oswald set out to extend his temporal power. He seems in the ensuing years to have established a certain degree of supremacy over the Strathclyde Welsh and to have received from the Picts and Scots on the other side of the Forth an acknowledgment of his "overlordship." Wessex, Kent, or Mercia can scarcely have acknowledged any real supremacy, but even the fierce Penda himself was apparently cowed into a temporary cessation of hostilities.[a]

Penda Slays Oswald

But the fate of Eadwine awaited Oswald, and the same prince was destined to be the minister of his death. In the eighth year of his reign, and the thirty-eighth of his age, the king of Northumbria fought with Penda and his Mercians in the field of Maser (642 A.D.). The pagans were victorious. Oswald, surrounded by enemies, was slain. The ferocity of Penda did not spare the dead body of his adversary, but severed the head and arms from the trunk, and fixed them on high poles driven into the ground. The body of Oswald was buried at Bardney, and his standard of purple and gold was suspended over the grave. The head and arms were taken down the year after his death by his brother Oswin, his successor, and deposited, the head in the monastery of Lindisfarne (Holy Island), the arms in the royal city of Bamborough.

Bamborough was the first place that ventured to stop the destructive progress of the Mercians after the battle of Maserfeld. Situated on a rock, and protected on one side by a steep ascent, on the other by the waters of the ocean, it bade defiance to their exertions. But the genius of Penda was fertile in expedients, and that which he adopted displays the ferocity of his disposition. By his order the neighbouring villages were demolished, every combustible material was collected from the ruins and reared up against the walls, and as soon as the wind blew fiercely towards the city, fire was set to the pile. Already were the smoke and flames wafted over the heads of the trembling inhabitants, when the wind suddenly changed, and the fire spent its fury in the opposite direction. Chagrined and confounded, Penda raised the siege, and led back his army.

OSWIN AND PENDA

The retreat of Penda afforded leisure to the Northumbrian thanes to elect a successor to Oswald. The object of their choice was his brother Oswin (Oswy), who inherited the abilities of his predecessor, and who, to strengthen his throne, married Eanfled, the daughter of Eadwine. But the power of the nation was now broken, and his long reign of twenty-eight years, though it was occasionally distinguished by brilliant successes, was harassed at intervals by the inroads of the Mercians, the hostility of his nephew Æthelwald, and the ambition of his own son Alchfrith.

In the second year of his reign he was alarmed by the claims of a dangerous competitor of the house of Ælle, Oswine, the son of Osric, and prudence or necessity induced him to consent to a compromise, by which he allotted Deira to his rival, but reserved to himself Bernicia and the northern conquests. The character of Oswine has been drawn in the most pleasing colours by the pencil of the venerable Bede. He was affable, just, religious, and generous. His virtues were idolised by his subjects, and his court was crowded with foreign Saxons, who solicited employment in his service. Six years the two princes lived in apparent amity with each other, but in the seventh their secret jealousy broke into open hostilities. Oswine, seeing no probability of success, disbanded his army, and concealed himself, with one attendant, at Gilling, the house of the ealdorman Hundwald (651 A.D.). The perfidious thane betrayed him to his enemy, and nothing but his death could satisfy the policy of Oswin. The bishop Aidan, who loved and revered him for his virtues, bitterly lamented his fate, and in twelve days followed him to the grave. The Northumbrian, however, did not reap the fruit of his cruelty. Æthelwald, the son of Oswald, was placed on the throne of the Deiri, probably by the superior influence of Penda.

That restless monarch had lately expelled Cenwahl from the throne of Wessex, because that prince had repudiated his daughter Sexburga. He now directed his arms against Northumbria, penetrated again as far as Bamborough, and set fire to every habitation in the line of his march. Oswin, warned by the fate of his immediate predecessors, Eadwine and Oswald, made every effort to mitigate the resentment of so formidable an enemy. He sent him the most valuable presents, his second son Egfrith was delivered as a hostage to the care of Cynwise, the queen of Penda, and Alchfrith, his eldest son, married Cyneburge, the daughter of the Mercian. This connection between the two families brought Peada, the son of Penda, to the Northumbrian court on a visit to his sister. There he saw and admired Alchfleda, the daughter of Oswin, but the difference of religion would have opposed an insuperable obstacle to their union, had not Alchfrith prevailed on his friend to listen to the teachers, and embrace the doctrines of Christianity. When his sincerity was questioned, he replied with warmth, that no consideration, not even the refusal of Alchfleda, should provoke him to return to the worship of Woden; and at his departure he took with him four priests to instruct his subjects, the southern Mercians, or Middle Angles, whom he governed with the title of king during the life of his father. It was to be feared that the conversion of Peada would irritate the fanaticism of Penda, but the old king, though he persevered in his attachment to the religion of his ancestors, expressed his admiration of the morality of the gospel, and permitted it to be taught to his subjects. To the converts, however, he shrewdly observed that as they had preferred the new worship, it was but just that they should practise

its precepts, and that every individual would incur his displeasure who should unite the manners of the paganism which he had abjured with the profession of the Christianity which he had embraced.

But Penda had again summoned his Mercians to arms. The first victim of his resentment was Anna, king of the East Angles, who for three years had afforded an asylum to Cenwahl, king of Wessex. He fell in battle (654 A.D.), and was succeeded by his brother Æthelhere, who artfully directed the hostility of the conqueror against the Northumbrians. It was in vain that Oswin endeavoured to avert the danger by the offer of submission and tribute. The Mercian declared that it was his object to exterminate the whole nation: the presents which had been sent were distributed among his auxiliaries; and thirty vassal chieftains, Saxons and Britons, swelled with their followers the numbers of his army. Despair at last nerved the courage of Oswin. With his son Alchfrith and a small but resolute force, he advanced to meet the multitude of the invaders (655 A.D.). The night before the eventful contest, he fervently implored the assistance of heaven, and vowed, if he returned victorious, to devote his infant daughter Ælfleda to the monastic profession. In the morning Æthelwald, ashamed, perhaps, of fighting against his countrymen, separated from the Mercians, and remained at a distance, a quiet spectator of the combat. The valour or despair of the Northumbrians prevailed. Of the thirty vassal chieftains who served under the banner of the Mercian, only Æthelwald, and the British king of Gwynedd, escaped. Penda did not survive the destruction of his army. This hoary veteran, who had reached his eightieth year, and had stained his sword with the blood of three kings of the East Angles, and of two of the Northumbrians, had been borne from the field by the crowd of the fugitives, but was overtaken by the pursuers, and put to death. The battle was fought at Winwædfield near Leeds: and the Aire, which had overflowed its banks, swept away more of the Mercians in their flight than had fallen by the sword of the enemy.[1]

The fall of Penda and the annihilation of his army opened an unexpected prospect to the ambition of Oswin. With rapidity he overran East Anglia and Mercia, subdued the astonished inhabitants, and made them feel the miseries which they had so often inflicted. Mercia he divided into two portions. The provinces on the north of the Trent he annexed to his own dominions: those on the south, out of compassion for his daughter, he permitted to remain under the government of her husband Peada. But that unfortunate prince did not long enjoy the donation. At the next festival of Easter he perished, by the treachery, it is said, of his wife; and his territory was immediately occupied by the Northumbrians.

[1] This battle, says Freeman,[r] "marks an important turning-point in the history of our island. The strife between the creeds of Christ and Woden was there finally decided."

Of Penda, Bright,[v] in his *Early Church History*, says: "This was Penda, 'the strenuous, king of the Mercians, 'the first ruler of the united Midland kingdom,' whose name was long a terror to the inmates of cell and minster in every Christianised district. There is a sort of weird grandeur in the career of one who in his time slew five kings, and might seem as irresistible as destiny." Through all his life Penda struggled against the Christian kingdoms, and remained a consistent heathen to the last. The simplicity and sincerity of his nature elevated his achievements to the epic level of the struggle of Satan in *Paradise Lost*. He must have despised Christianity as teaching a doctrine of weakness and non-resistance; but he despised the Christians more for preaching peace, even while they were waging wars. Those who practised Christianity sincerely he spared. Here the veracity of Bede[h] has again preserved to us a most interesting portrait. "Nor did King Penda obstruct the preaching of the word among his people, the Mercians, if any were willing to hear it; but, on the contrary, he hated and despised those whom he perceived not to perform the works of faith, when they had once received the faith, saying, "They are contemptible and wretched who do not obey their God in whom they believe." [a]

Oswin was now king in the fullest sense of the word. The union of Mercia with Northumbria had placed under his control a greater extent of territory than had belonged to any of his predecessors: the princes of the Britons and Saxons unanimously submitted to his authority; and the greater part of the Picts and Scots were careful to avert his enmity by the payment of annual tribute. Yet long before his death his power suffered a considerable diminution. Three Mercian ealdormen, Immin, Eafha, and Eadbert, took up arms to recover the independence of their country, expelled the Northumbrian magistrates, and conferred the sceptre on a prince whom they had anxiously concealed from Oswin—Wulfhere, the youngest son of Penda. In defiance of the Northumbrian he retained his authority, and united under his government the Mercians, the Middle Angles, and the Lindiswaras, or natives of the county of Lincoln (659 A.D.). To add to the mortification of Oswin, his eldest son, Alchfrith, required a portion of the Northumbrian territory with the title of king. A hint in Bede would lead us to suppose that he even drew the sword against his father. As Æthelwald had perished, the ambition of Alchfrith was gratified, and a kingdom was assigned him in the country of the Deiri.[b]

It was during the reign of Oswin that the church began to assume something of the influence in England that was to make it at a later time one of the most powerful agents in welding together the warring kingdoms into a single nation. At this time, however, differences within the church itself made such a mission an impossibility. The greater part of England had been converted by the Celtic missionaries. The teachings of these men were orthodox, but in some matters of discipline they differed radically from the church at Canterbury and the churches on the Continent. Of these the most important were the form and shape of the tonsure, and the time of the celebration of Easter. In 664 A.D. Oswin called the clergy to meet at Whitby to discuss their differences. Oswin listened to the arguments advanced by both factions, and finally gave his decision in favour of the Roman party, who declared their authority was derived from St. Peter, for, as the king explained, St. Peter was the keeper of the keys of heaven, and he wanted to be sure of being admitted when he knocked at the gate. Thenceforth, in all matters of discipline and ritual, the English Church was, outwardly at least, regulated in conformity with that at Rome. Four years later Theodore of Tarsus, who had been consecrated archbishop of Canterbury at Rome, completely reorganised the church and introduced the penitential system.

Even before the death of Oswin, which occurred in 670 A.D., the power of Northumbria, as we have seen, had begun to decline. The neighbouring kingdom of Mercia, after having maintained a position of power under the great Penda, had, after a brief set-back following his death, again begun to assume strength under the able rule of his son Wulfhere. Wessex, during the years in which first Northumbria and then Mercia held positions of superiority among the Saxon nations, had struggled with varying success against both Britons and Saxons. For a hundred years internal dissensions and quarrels in the reigning family had rendered impossible anything more than the rather precarious maintenance of the kingdom's independent existence. But the state of the West Saxons possessed and preserved what neither Northumbria nor Mercia ever had—a national unity. And at the proper time the assertion of this spirit was to make Wessex the most potent factor in the welding of all England into a single nation. It is with the progress and development of these three kingdoms that the fortunes of the English people are henceforth chiefly linked—the history of Essex, Kent, East Anglia, and Sussex is important only as its relation to them is of importance.[a]

THE DECLINE OF NORTHUMBRIA

From Oswin, the Northumbrian sceptre was transferred to the hands of Egfrith, the elder of his surviving sons. The Picts, despising the youth of the new monarch, assembled under their prince, Bernherth, and asserted their independence. But Egfrith, with a vigour which surprised and dismayed them, put himself at the head of a body of horse, entered their territory, defeated them in a bloody battle, and compelled them to submit again to the superior power of the Northumbrians. With equal expedition he anticipated and defeated the designs of Wulfhere, king of Mercia, who numbered among his vassals most of the southern chieftains. The victory broke for a while the power of the Mercians. Wulfhere died soon after, and his kingdom was at first seized by the Northumbrian, but restored to Æthelred, who had married Osthryda, the sister of Egfrith.

Religious prejudice has conferred an adventitious interest on the reign of Egfrith, and his quarrel with Wilfrid, the celebrated bishop of York, occupies a distinguished but disproportionate space in our modern histories. Wilfrid was a noble Northumbrian, who had been selected as the instructor and confident of Alchfrith, the son of Oswin. When Tuda died, Wilfrid was chosen to succeed him in the bishopric of York. Egfrith's first wife was Æthelthryda, the daughter of Anna, king of the East Angles, and widow of Tondberct, ealdorman of the Girvii. At an early period in life she had bound herself by a vow of virginity, which was respected by the piety or indifference of her husband. At his death she was demanded by Oswin for his son Egfrith, a youth of only fourteen years: and in spite of her remonstrances was conducted by her relations to the court of Northumbria. She persisted in her former resolution; and Egfrith, when he ascended the throne, referred the matter to the decision of Wilfrid, having previously offered him a valuable present if he could prevail on Æthelthryda to renounce her early vow. The prelate, however, disappointed his hopes: the princess took the veil at Coldingham; and the friendship between Wilfrid and Egfrith was considerably impaired. The king now married Irmenburh, a princess, the violence of whose character excited the discontent of the people and the remonstrances of the bishop. The freedom of his admonitions mortified her pride, and she found in her husband the willing minister of her vengeance.

In the exercise of his authority Archbishop Theodore was always severe, occasionally despotic. At the solicitation of Egfrith and Irmenburh, he came to Northumbria, divided the ample diocese of York into three portions, and consecrated three new prelates. Wilfrid appealed to Pope Agatho, who decided that Wilfrid should be restored to his former bishopric. [The hostility of Egfrith and his wife, however, continued. Wilfrid was thrown into prison on his return and eventually was driven into Sussex, where he devoted himself to missionary labours.]

Though the royal families of Northumbria and Mercia were allied by marriage, their union had been broken by the ambition of Egfrith. The hostile armies met on the Trent (679 A.D.); their valour was wasted in a dubious conflict; and peace was restored by the paternal exhortations of Theodore. Ælfwine, the brother of Egfrith, had fallen in the battle; and, as the honour of the king compelled him to demand compensation, he was persuaded to accept the legal *were* instead of prolonging hostilities for the uncertain purpose of vengeance. Afterwards he despatched Berht, a warlike and sanguinary chieftain, to ravage the coast of Ireland. In the following

year (685 A.D.), Egfrith, against the advice of his council, led an army into the territory of the Picts. Brude, the Pictish king, prudently retired before a superior enemy, till his pursuers had entangled themselves in the defiles of the mountains. At Dun Nechtain [Dunnichen] was fought a battle which proved most fatal to the Northumbrians: few escaped from the slaughter; Egfrith himself was found on the field by the conquerors, and honourably interred in the royal cemetery in the Isle of Hii. The Picts and Scots, and some tribes of the Britons, took advantage of this opportunity to recover their independence: Trumwin, whom Egfrith had appointed bishop at Abercorn, fled with his clergy into the south; and of the Saxon settlers, all who had not the good fortune to make a precipitate escape were put to the sword or consigned to perpetual slavery.

Egfrith had left no issue by Irmenburh; and the Northumbrian thanes offered the crown to Aldfrith, the reputed but illegitimate son of Oswin. During the last reign he had retired to the western isles, and had devoted the time of his exile to study under the instruction of the Scottish monks. His proficiency obtained for him from his contemporaries the title of the learned king. Though his pacific disposition and diminished power did not permit him to assume the superiority which had been possessed by several of his predecessors, he reigned respected by his neighbours, beloved by his subjects, and praised by the learned whom he patronised. If he conducted in person any military expedition, it has escaped the notice of historians: but the celebrated Berht, by his order or with his permission, attempted to obliterate the disgrace which the late defeat had brought on the Northumbrian arms; and, like the unfortunate Egfrith, lost in the attempt both his life and his army.[b]

With the death of Aldfrith the history of Northumbria ceases to hold much of interest to those who would seek in its annals anything that contributed to the progress of England towards a united nationality. The century that follows is one long succession of murders, treasons, and revolts. Of the fourteen kings who ascended the throne, only one died in the peaceable possession of royal power. Seven were slain, and six driven from the throne by rivals or rebellious subjects. Only in the reign of Eadbert (737–758 A.D.) do we find a temporary revival of the kingdom's glory and power. By the middle of the ninth century treason and anarchy had so eaten into the structure of the northern kingdom that its national pride and spirit had been broken, its central government had become little more than a shadow, and it fell an easy victim to the fierce onslaught of the Northmen. Its weakness enabled the invaders to secure a strong foothold on the island, and proved indeed one of the greatest contributing factors to their success.[a]

THE SUPREMACY OF MERCIA

We have noticed the accession of Wulfhere to the throne of Mercia, and his frequent and not inglorious struggles against the power of the Northumbrians. With equal spirit, and eventually with greater success, he opposed his southern rivals, the kings of Wessex. In the first conflict the chance of war made Wulfhere the prisoner of Cenwahl, but with the recovery of his liberty he obliterated the disgrace of his defeat. At the battle of Pontisbury (661 A.D.) the forces of Wessex were dispersed, and the victors ravaged the country of their enemies, and the Wihtwaras, the inhabitants of the Isle of Wight, submitted to the dominion of Wulfhere. "That prince was

now the most powerful of the kings on the south of the Humber. And he employed his authority in promoting the diffusion of Christianity among his dependents. Idolatry disappeared in Mercia; the natives of Essex, who, during the pestilence, had returned to the worship of Woden, were reclaimed by the preaching of the bishop Jarumnan, and Edilwalch, king of Sussex, at the persuasion of Wulfhere, professed himself a Christian. On the day of his baptism, he received from his royal god-father the sovereignty of the Isle of Wight, and of a district comprehending almost the eastern moiety of Hampshire.

The power of Wulfhere declined as rapidly as it had risen. Towards the end of his reign he was defeated by the Northumbrians, and lost the province of the Lindiswaras. The men of Wessex, who had borne his superiority with impatience, were encouraged by the victory of the Northumbrians to try again the fortune of war. Though the battle was not decisive, it contributed to break the power of Wulfhere, at whose death Egfrith, the Northumbrian monarch, overran and subjected the kingdom (675 A.D.).

ÆTHELRED
(From an old print)

Æthelred was the brother of Wulfhere, and had married Osthryda, the sister of Egfrith. To this alliance he was perhaps indebted for the crown of Mercia. He led an army against Lothaire, king of Kent (676 A.D.), burnt the villages and churches, carried off the inhabitants, and destroyed the city of Rochester. He next demanded the province of the Lindiswaras from Egfrith; a war ensued; Ælfwine, the brother of the Northumbrian, was slain, and Æthelred, though he paid the *were* for the death of Ælfwine, recovered the possession of the disputed territory. For many years he reigned with honour, but the murder of his queen, Osthryda, by the Suthenhymbre, the people between the Trent and the Humber, deeply affected his mind. He gave the government of the discontented district to his nephew Cœnred, the son of Wulfhere, and at last abdicated the throne in his favour. He had children of his own, but they were of an immature age, and the nation preferred a successor of approved judgment and in the vigour of manhood. Æthelred then took the monastic vows in the monastery of Bardeney, was raised to the office of abbot, and died at an advanced age in 716 A.D.

Cœnred was a prince whose piety and love of peace are loudly applauded by our ancient chroniclers, but whose short reign of five years affords only a barren theme to the historian. As soon as Ceolred, the son of the preceding monarch, was of an age to wield the sceptre, Cœnred resigned the crown (709 A.D.), and travelling to Rome, received the monastic habit from the hands of Pope Constantine.

The reign of Ceolred was almost as tranquil as that of his predecessor. Once only had he recourse to the fortune of arms, against Ine, king of Wessex. The battle was fought at Wodnesbeorh, and the victory was claimed by each nation. But Ceolred degenerated from the piety of his fathers, and by the licentiousness of his morals alienated the minds of the Mercians. In the eighth year of his reign, as he sat at table with his thanes, he suddenly lost his reason, and shortly after expired in the most excruciating torment.

Contemporary with Ceolred was Æthelbald, a descendant of Alwin, the brother of Penda. He was in the vigour of youth, graceful in his person, ambitious of power, and immoderate in his pleasures. To avoid the jealousy of Ceolred, by whom he was considered a rival, Æthelbald had concealed himself among the marshes of Croyland, where he was hospitably entertained by Guthlac, a celebrated hermit. As soon as he had learned the death of his persecutor, he issued from his retreat, assumed the sceptre without opposition, and afterwards, to testify his gratitude for his former benefactor, raised a magnificent church and monastery over the tomb of Guthlac. The character of Æthelbald was a compound of vice and virtue. He was liberal to the poor and to his dependents, he watched with solicitude over the administration of justice, and he severely repressed the hereditary feuds, which divided the Mercian thanes and impaired the strength of the nation. Yet in his own favour he never scrupled to invade the rights of his subjects, and that no restraint might be imposed upon his pleasures, he refused to shackle himself with the obligations of marriage. The noblest families were disgraced, the sanctity of the cloister was profaned by his amours. The report of his immorality reached the ears of the missionary St. Boniface, who from the heart of Germany wrote to him a letter of most earnest expostulation. What influence it had on his conduct is not mentioned, but he soon afterwards attended a synod, held by Archbishop Cuthbert for the reformation of manners, and long before his death forsook the follies and vices of his youth.

Of the kings who had hitherto swayed the Mercian sceptre, Æthelbald was the most powerful. From the Humber to the southern channel, he compelled every tribe to obey his authority: but he seems to have respected the power or the abilities of the Northumbrian monarchs: he ventured twice to invade their territories, but it was at times when they were engaged in the north against the Picts, and the spoils which he obtained were dearly purchased by the infamy of the aggression. In the south the kings of Wessex struggled with impatience against his ascendancy, but every effort appeared only to rivet their chains.[b] The armies of Æthelbald continually overran the kingdom, and after the capture of the royal town of Somerton in 733 A.D. the Mercian supremacy was accepted. Against the Welsh he led an army in which the men of Kent, of East Anglia, and of Wessex fought side by side with the Mercians. For twenty years all Britain south of the Humber acknowledged the overlordship of Æthelbald, who proudly styled himself "King not of the Mercians only, but of all the neighbouring peoples who are called by the common name of Southern English."[a] At length, in 752 A.D., Cuthred of Wessex undertook to emancipate himself and his country, and boldly opposed the Mercians in the field of Burford in Oxfordshire. In the open space between the two armies, Æthilhun, who bore the golden dragon, the banner of Wessex, slew with his own hand the standard-bearer of Æthelbald: and his countrymen hailed as the omen of victory the valour of their champion. An ancient poet has described in striking language the shock of the two armies; the shouts and efforts of the combatants, their murderous weapons, the spear, the long sword, and the battle-axe, and their prodigality of life in the defence

of their respective standards. Chance at length conducted Æthelbald to Æthilhun: but the king of Mercia shrunk before the gigantic stature and bloody brand of his adversary, and gave to his followers the example of a precipitate flight.

This defeat abolished for a time the superiority of Mercia. Æthelbald did not long survive his disgrace. Beornred, a noble Mercian, aspired to the throne, and a battle was fought on the hill of Segeswald in Warwickshire (757 A.D.). The king either fell in the engagement or was killed by his own guards on the following night.

THE REIGN OF OFFA

The death of Æthelbald transferred the momentary possession of the crown to Beornred; but the thanes espoused the interests of Offa, a prince of royal descent; and the usurper, at the end of a few months, was defeated in battle and driven out of Mercia (757 A.D.). Of the reign of the new monarch the first fourteen years were employed in the subjugation of his domestic enemies, and the consolidation of his own power. In 771 A.D. he first appeared in the character of a conqueror, and subdued the Hestingi, a people inhabiting the coast of Sussex. Three years afterwards he invaded Kent and routed the natives at Otford. From the more feeble, he turned his arms against the more powerful, states. He entered Oxfordshire, which then belonged to Wessex; Cynewulf, the West Saxon monarch [was defeated by him at] Bensington (777 A.D.), and the territory on the left bank of the Thames became the reward of the conqueror. The Britons were next the victims of his ambition. The kings of Powys were driven from Shrewsbury beyond the Wye; the country between that river and the Severn was planted with colonies of Saxons; and a trench and rampart [known as Offa's Dyke], stretching over a space of one hundred miles from the mouth of the Wye to the estuary of the Dee, separated the subjects of Offa from the incursions of their vindictive neighbours.

ÆTHELBALD
(From an old print)

The chair of St. Peter was filled at this period by Adrian, the friend and favourite of Charlemagne. In 785 A.D. two papal legates, the bishops of Ostia and Tudertum, accompanied by an envoy from the French monarch, landed in England, and convoked two synods, the one in Northumbria, the other in Mercia. The latter was attended by Offa, and by all the princes and prelates on the south of the Humber. According to Offa's wishes a proposition was made in the synod that the jurisdiction of the see of Canterbury should be confined to the three kingdoms of Kent, Sussex, and Wessex; that one of the Mercian bishops should be raised to the archiepiscopal rank; and that all the prelates between the Thames and the Humber should be subject to his

authority. Jaenbercht [the archbishop of Canterbury] did not acquiesce without a struggle in the degradation of his church; but the influence of Offa was irresistible; and Higebert of Lichfield was selected to be the new metropolitan. Adrian assented to the wishes of the king:[1] the pallium with the archiepiscopal dignity was conferred upon Adulph, the successor of Higebert, in the see of Lichfield; and Jaenbercht was compelled to content himself with the obedience of the bishops of Rochester, London, Selsey, Winchester, and Sherborne. Before the conclusion of the council, Ecgferth, the son of Offa, was solemnly crowned, and from that period reigned conjointly with his father.

Alcuin, the Anglo-Saxon preceptor of Charlemagne, had been instrumental in opening an epistolary correspondence between his royal pupil and the king of Mercia. Charlemagne, as a proof of his friendship, had proposed a marriage between his illegitimate son Charles and a daughter of Offa. The Mercian, as the price of his consent, demanded a French princess for his son Ecgferth. If we reflect that the two monarchs had hitherto treated each other on the footing of perfect equality, there will not appear anything peculiarly offensive in such a demand. Yet it wounded the pride of Charlemagne; he broke off all communication with the Mercian court; and the trade with the English merchants experienced the most rigorous prohibitions. But Gerwold, the collector of the customs, whose interests probably suffered from this interruption of commerce, contrived to pacify his sovereign; and Alcuin, who was commissioned to negotiate with the Mercian, succeeded in restoring the relations of amity between the two courts.

The most powerful of the Saxon princes were ambitious of an alliance with the family of Offa. Beorhtric and Æthelred, the kings of Wessex and Northumbria, had already married his daughters Eadburh and Ælfleda; and Æthelberht, the young king of the East Angles, was a suitor for the hand of their sister Ætheldrida. This amiable and accomplished prince, by the advice of his council, proceeded with a numerous train to Mercia. On the confines he halted, and sent forward a messenger with presents and a letter announcing the object of his intended visit. A kind invitation was returned, accompanied with a promise of security. At his arrival he was received with the attention becoming his dignity, and expressions of affection most flattering to his hopes. The day was spent in feasting and merriment: in the evening Æthelberht retired to his apartment: but shortly afterwards was invited by Wimbert, an officer of the palace, to visit Offa, who wished to confer with him on matters of importance. The unsuspecting prince, as he followed his guide through a dark passage, was surrounded by ruffians and deprived of life. At the news, his attendants mounted their horses and fled: Ætheldrida, disappointed in her expectations of worldly happiness, retired from court, and lived a recluse in the abbey of Croyland: and Offa, shut up in his closet, affected, by external demonstrations of grief, to persuade the world of his innocence. Gratitude to the founder of his abbey has induced the monk of St. Albans to transfer the whole guilt from the king to his consort Cynethyrth: by every other ancient writer, though she is said to have suggested, he is represented as having sanctioned, the foul deed; and, if it be true that he immediately annexed East Anglia to his own dominions, little doubt can be entertained that the man who reaped the

[1] [Adrian was apparently at first opposed to granting Offa's request, and Offa was so incensed with his resistance that he communicated with Charlemagne, suggesting the Pope's deposition. The subsequent papal assent was probably due to Charlemagne's suggestion that it would save trouble to humour the Mercian king.]

advantage had directed the execution of the murder. Offa honoured the memory of the prince whose blood he had shed by erecting a stately tomb over his remains, and bestowing rich donations on the church of Hereford, in which they reposed. About the same time he endowed the magnificent abbey of St. Albans. But his heart was corroded by remorse, and his body enfeebled by disease. Within two years (794 A.D.) he followed Æthelberht to the grave.

Ecgferth, who had been crowned nine years before, succeeded his father. The ancient writers indulge in reflections on the misfortunes of a family the establishment of which had cost its founder so many crimes. Ecgferth died without issue after he had possessed the crown one hundred and forty-one days. Of his sisters, Ælfleda became a widow soon after her marriage; Eadburh died in poverty and exile in Italy; and Ætheldrida finished her days in seclusion at Croyland. Within a few years after the murder of Æthelberht, Offa and his race had disappeared for ever.

The throne of Mercia was next filled by Ceonwulf, descended from another of the brothers of Penda. At the commencement of his reign (796 A.D.), a singular revolution in Kent directed his attention to that kingdom. By the death of Aluric the race of Hengist became extinct, and the prospect of a throne awakened the ambition of several competitors. The successful candidate was a clergyman related to the descendants of Cerdic, Eadberht Praen,[1] whose aspiring mind preferred the crown to the tonsure. Æthelheard, the archbishop of Canterbury, treated Eadberht as an apostate, Eadberht considered him as a rebel, and the metropolitan, unable to maintain the discipline of the canons, consulted the Roman pontiff, Leo III, who after mature deliberation, excommunicated the king, and threatened that if he did not return to the clerical profession, he would exhort all the inhabitants of Britain to unite in punishing his disobedience. Ceonwulf took this office on himself, and Eadberht, convinced that resistance would be vain, endeavoured to elude the vigilance and revenge of his enemies. He was, however, taken: his eyes were put out, and both his hands amputated. Cuthred, a creature of the victors, obtained the throne, with the title, but without the authority, of king.

The next undertaking of Ceonwulf was to restore to the successors of St. Augustine the prerogatives of which they had been despoiled at the imperious demand of Offa. The authority of the new metropolitan had been endured with reluctance by the English prelates. The archbishops of Canterbury and York seized the first opportunity of conveying to the king the sentiments of the episcopal body, and the metropolitan of Lichfield was reduced to his former station among the suffragans of Canterbury.

After a prosperous reign of twenty-six years, Ceonwulf was killed in an expedition against the East Anglians. He was succeeded by his only son, Cenelm (St. Kenelm), a boy of seven years. After the lapse of a few months the young prince was barbarously murdered. Suspicion attributed his death to his elder sister Cwenthryth, whose ambition, it was said, would have willingly purchased the crown with the blood of a brother. If such were her views, she was disappointed. Ceolwulf, her uncle, ascended the throne; but his reign was short. In his second year he was dethroned by Beornwulf, a Mercian, who had no better title than his power and opulence. His abilities are said to have been unequal to his station, and he was soon compelled to yield to the superior genius of Egbert, king of Wessex (824 A.D.).

[1] [Ramsay *f* does not think Eadberht Praen a renegade priest at all. "A more probable explanation," he says, "suggests that Eadberht was a troublesome ætheling, leader of a national Kentish party in opposition to the Mercian supremacy; and that he had been tonsured to incapacitate him for rule."]

THE RISE OF WESSEX

In Wessex the descendants of Cerdic, after a struggle of three hundred years, triumphed over every opponent, and united all the nations of the Anglo-Saxons in one great and powerful monarchy. The death of Ceawlin and the accession of his nephew Ceolric have been already noticed. To Ceolric, after a short reign of five years, succeeded his brother Ceolwulf, whose enterprising spirit engaged him in constant hostilities with the Saxons, Britons, Scots, and Picts. The men of Sussex made a bold but unsuccessful effort to recover their independence. The war was conducted with the most obstinate valour, and though Ceolwulf crushed his opponents, it was with the loss of his bravest warriors. He next led a numerous army against the Britons, drove Mouric, their king, beyond the Severn, and penetrated to the banks of the Wye.

Ceolwulf was succeeded (611 A.D.) by Cynegils, the son of Ceolric, who divided the kingdom with his brother Cwichelm. This partition did not diminish the strength of the nation. The two brothers appeared to be animated by the same spirit, and united their efforts to promote the public prosperity. They led a powerful army to Bampton, in Devonshire. The Britons fled at the martial appearance of the enemy. The three sons of Sæberht, who had succeeded to the kingdom of Essex, ventured to provoke the hostility of the two brothers; but they fell on the field of battle, and of their followers but few escaped to carry the intelligence to their countrymen.

The character of Cwichelm is disgraced by the attempt of his messenger Eomer to assassinate Eadwine, king of Northumbria. What peculiar provocation he might have received, it is vain to conjecture: according to Malmesbury,[p] he had been deprived of part of his territory. The silence of historians acquits Cynegils of any share in the guilt of his brother; but he was unwilling to see him fall a victim to the resentment of the Northumbrian, and assisted him with all his forces in a fruitless attempt to repel Eadwine. Fortunately, the conqueror was appeased, and left them in possession of their territories. Two years afterwards, Penda, who was then beginning his sanguinary career, determined to measure his strength with that of the West Saxons. The battle was fought at Cirencester. The obstinacy of the two armies prolonged the contest till it was interrupted by the darkness of night. The conflict was about to be renewed in the morning, when both parties, appalled by the loss of the preceding day, were induced by their mutual fears to listen to terms of reconciliation. Cynegils survived his brother seven years, and died in 642 A.D.

The throne was next filled by Cenwahl, the son of the last monarch, who had refused to embrace Christianity with his father and uncle. He had formerly married a sister of Penda; but as soon as he obtained the crown, he dismissed her with ignominy, and bestowed his hand on a more favourite princess. The Mercian, urged by resentment, entered Wessex, defeated Cenwahl and chased him out of his dominions. He found an asylum in the territory of Anna, the virtuous king of the East Angles, where he was induced to abjure the deities of paganism. In the third year of his exile, he recovered his throne by the assistance of his nephew Cuthred. Cenwahl was eminently successful against the Britons. He defeated them at Bradford, and afterwards at Pen, and made the Parret the western boundary of his kingdom. But he was compelled to bend before the superior power

[661–685 A.D.]

of Wulfhere, king of Mercia. The chance of war threw that prince into the hands of Cenwahl, but he recovered his liberty, defeated the West Saxons (661 A.D.), and transferred the sovereignty of the Isle of Wight and part of Hampshire to Edilwalch, the king of Sussex.

At the death of Cenwahl without children (672 A.D.), an alluring prospect was opened to the ambition of the remaining descendants of Cerdic, but the reins of government were instantly seized by his widow Sexburga, a princess whose spirit and abilities were worthy of a crown. By her promptitude and decision she anticipated or suppressed the attempts of her opponents. At the head of her army she overawed the neighbouring princes, who were eager to humble the power of Wessex, and by the lenity of her sway, endeavoured to reconcile her subjects to the novelty of a female reign. Yet a general discontent prevailed; the chieftains conceived it a disgrace to submit to the sceptre of a woman, and she would probably have been driven from the throne, had not her death anticipated the attempt, before the first year of her reign was expired.

The government of Wessex now assumed the form of an aristocracy. The most powerful thanes associated for their mutual defence, and in the emergencies of foreign war conferred [in succession on several of their number] the title of king. Among the numerous princes of the family of Cerdic was Ceadwalla, of the house of Ceawlin. His youth, activity, and courage had distinguished him above his equals; but the qualities which attracted the admiration of the people alarmed the jealousy of Centwin [then king], and Ceadwalla, with a band of faithful adherents, retired into Sussex. Yet the fugitive scorned to solicit assistance from the enemies of his country, and in the forests of Andred's Weald and Chiltene he maintained his independence. Insensibly the number of his followers increased, adventurers and malcontents crowded to his standard, and he made a sudden and unexpected irruption into the cultivated part of Sussex. Æthelwealh, who attempted with a few followers to oppose him, was slain, and the flames of war were spread over the country, when the ealdormen Berhthune and Æthelhune returned from Kent with the army of Sussex, and drove this band of outlaws to their former asylum in the forest. There Ceadwalla received the welcome intelligence that his persecutor Centwin was dead, and had generously, on his death-bed, named him his successor. He hastened into Wessex (685 A.D.); his reputation had already interested the people in his favour, his rivals were intimidated by the martial appearance of his followers, and Ceadwalla ascended, without opposition, the throne of Cerdic.

The first care of the new king was to remove the disgrace which he had so lately received in Sussex. With a powerful army he entered that country, slew Berhthune in battle, and reduced the natives to their former dependence on the crown of Wessex. Thence he pursued his victorious career into Kent. The inhabitants fled at his approach: and the riches of the open country became the spoil of the invaders.

The Isle of Wight had been formerly subjugated and colonised by a body of Jutes. Wulfhere had severed it from Wessex: Ceadwalla resolved to reunite it to his dominions. Arvald, who held the island under the crown of Sussex, defended himself with courage; and Ceadwalla received several wounds before he could subdue his antagonist. The next theatre of his ambition was the kingdom of Kent. His brother Mul commanded the West-Saxon army; and the natives, recurring to the policy which they had adopted in the former year, retired at the approach of the invaders. Mul, whom the absence of an enemy had rendered negligent, incautiously separated from his forces with

twelve attendants. He was descried by the peasants, attacked, hunted into a cottage, and burnt to death. Ceadwalla hastened to revenge the fate of his brother, and devoted the whole of Kent to the flames and the sword.

From his first acquaintance with Wilfrid, the king had imbibed a favourable notion of the Christian worship: when he had mounted the throne, he invited the bishop into Wessex, honoured him as his father and benefactor, and determined to embrace the faith of the gospel. Another prince would have been content to receive baptism from his own prelate or his instructor: Ceadwalla resolved to receive it from the hands of the sovereign pontiff. He crossed the sea (688 A.D)., visited in his progress the most celebrated churches, testified his piety by costly presents, was honourably entertained by Cuninebert, king of the Lombards, and entered Rome in the spring of the year 688 A.D. On the vigil of Easter he was baptised by Pope Sergius, and changed his name to that of Peter, in honour of the prince of the apostles. But before he laid aside the white robes, the usual distinction of those who had been lately baptised, he was seized with a mortal illness, and died on the 20th of April, in the thirtieth year of his age.

INE AND HIS SUCCESSORS

The successor of Ceadwalla was Ine, who derived his descent from Ceawlin, (689 A.D.). As a warrior Ine was equal, as a legislator he was superior, to the most celebrated of his predecessors. In the fifth year of his reign he assembled the witenagemot, and "with the advice of his father Cenred, of his bishops Hedda and Erconwald, of all his ealdormen, and wise men and clergy," enacted seventy-nine laws, by which he regulated the administration of justice, fixed the legal compensation for crimes, checked the prevalence of hereditary feuds, placed the conquered Britons under the protection of the state, and exposed and punished the frauds which might be committed in the transfer of merchandise and the cultivation of land. Essex (by what means is unknown) had already been annexed to his crown; and Kent was again destined to lament the day in which Mul had perished. At the head of a resistless army Ine demanded the *were* for the death of his cousin; and Withred, king of Kent, to appease the resentment of the invader, paid the full compensation, thirty thousand pounds of silver. The West-Saxon monarch steadily pursued the policy of his fathers in the gradual subjugation of the Britons; added by successive conquests several districts to the western provinces of his kingdom; and expelled, after long struggles, Geraint, the king of Cornwall. His dispute with Ceolred of Mercia was more bloody and less glorious. The battle was fought at Wodnesbeorh (Wamborough) (715 A.D.). Both claimed the victory: but neither dared to renew the engagement.

If the abilities of Ine had promoted the prosperity of Wessex, the duration of his reign exhausted the patience of the more aspiring among the descendants of Cerdic. He had swayed the sceptre two-and-thirty years, when the ætheling Cynewulf ventured to claim the royal authority, and in a short time paid the forfeit of his ambition. The next year his example was followed by another pretender named Ealdberht, who seized the strong castle of Taunton, which Ine had lately erected in Somersetshire. It was at the moment when an insurrection had drawn the king into Sussex: but his queen, Æthelburh, assembled an army, took the fortress by storm, and levelled it with the ground. Ealdberht had the good fortune to escape from his pursuers, and was raised by the enemies of Ine to the throne of Sussex. During two years the natives successfully maintained the struggle for their independence,

but in the third they were defeated, and the death of Ealdberht consummated the subjection of their country (725 A.D.).

Ine was the friend and benefactor of the churchmen. The religious sentiments which he had imbibed in early life sunk more deeply into his mind as he advanced in years, and their influence was strengthened by the exhortations of his queen, who ardently wished for the retirement of the cloister. With this view, if we may credit the narrative of Malmesbury,[p] she devised and executed the most singular stratagem. The king and queen had given a splendid entertainment to the nobility and clergy of the kingdom. The following morning they left the castle, but after a ride of a few hours, Ine, at the earnest solicitation of Æthelburh, consented to return. He was surprised at the silence and solitude which appeared to reign in the castle. At each step his astonishment increased. The furniture had disappeared, the hall was strewn with fragments and rubbish, and a litter of swine occupied the very bed in which he had passed the night. His eyes interrogated the queen, who seized the moment to read her husband a lecture on the vanity of human greatness and the happy serenity of an obscure and religious life. It is not, however, necessary to have recourse to the story. There are other grounds on which the determination of Ine may be explained, without attributing it to so clumsy an artifice. He had now reigned seven-and-thirty years. The peace of his old age had been disturbed by rebellion. His body was broken by infirmity, his mind distracted by care. Experience had taught him how difficult it was to hold with a feeble hand the reigns of government among a warlike and turbulent nobility. He resolved to descend from that situation, which he could no longer retain with dignity, and religion offered to his gray hairs a safe and a holy retreat. In the witenagemot he resigned the crown (728 A.D.), released his subjects from their allegiance, and expressed his wish to spend the remainder of his days in lamenting the errors of his youth. Within a few weeks the royal penitent, accompanied by Æthelburh, quitted Wessex. To watch and pray at the tombs of the apostles Peter and Paul was the first object of their wishes, and after a tedious journey they arrived in Rome, and visited the holy places. It may be, as some writers have asserted, that Ine then built the school of the English in that city: but this circumstance was unknown to the more ancient historians, and can hardly be reconciled with the humility of the king, whose endeavour it was to elude the notice of the public, and to live confounded with the mass of the common people. On this account he refused to shave his head, or wear the monastic habit, and continued to support himself by the labour of his hands, and to perform his devotions in the garb of a poor and unknown pilgrim. He died before the expiration of the year, and was followed to the grave by Æthelburh, the consort of his greatness, and the faithful companion of his poverty and repentance.[b]

When Ine resigned the crown, he recommended to his people Æthelheard, his queen's brother, and Oswald, a descendant of the house of Ceawlin. The two princes immediately became antagonists, and Oswald, defeated, died in 730 A.D. Æthelheard followed him in 741 A.D., leaving his throne to his brother Cuthred, who defeated the Mercians and again secured the independence of Wessex. Cuthred, in turn, was succeeded in 754 A.D. by Sigebert, who before the year's end was deposed and replaced by Cynewulf of the house of Cerdic.[a]

Of the long reign of Cynewulf we know little more than that it was signalised by several victories over the Britons, and disgraced by the surrender of Bensington to the Mercians (775 A.D.).

The throne was next occupied by Beorhtric. The West-Saxon thanes had still retained the ancient privilege of electing their kings. Though they confined their choice to the descendants of Cerdic, they frequently disregarded the order of hereditary succession. This practice was productive of the most serious evils. Every prince of the royal race nourished the hope of ascending the throne; and, as the unsuccessful candidate often appealed to the sword, the strength of the nation was impaired by domestic dissensions; and the reigning king was frequently compelled to divert his attention from the general welfare to his own individual security. The opponent of Beorhtric was Egbert, who, unable to withstand the power of his enemy, left the island, and sought employment in the armies of Charlemagne. Of the exploits of Beorhtric, during the sixteen years of his reign, historians are silent: the circumstances of his death, on account of its consequences, have arrested their attention. Beorhtric had married Eadburh, the daughter of Offa, a princess as ambitious and unprincipled as her father. By her imperious temper she governed her husband, and, through him, the whole nation. The king had noticed with particular distinction the ealdorman Worr. Jealous of the rising influence of this young nobleman, Eadburh prepared for him a poisonous potion; but, unfortunately, the king drank of the same cup, and accompanied his favourite to the grave. The West Saxons vented their imprecations against the murderess, who escaped with her treasures to France; and the witenagemot enacted a law by which the consorts of the future kings were deprived of the style and privileges of royalty. Eadburh was presented to Charlemagne, and when the jeering monarch asked her whom she would have, him or his son, "Your son," she replied, "for he is the younger." The emperor was, or affected to be, displeased; but made her a present of an opulent monastery, in which she resided with the title of abbess. Soon, however, her dissolute conduct scandalised the sisterhood and the public. She was expelled with ignominy, and after many adventures terminated her miserable existence at Pavia in Italy, where the daughter of the king of Mercia, and widow of the king of Wessex, was often seen soliciting in rags the charity of passengers.

EGBERT AND THE COMING OF THE NORTHMEN

The expulsion of Egbert, and his reception at the court of Charlemagne have been already mentioned. Three years he served in the armies of that emperor, and improved the period of his exile in acquiring a proficiency in the arts of war and government. The death of Beorhtric recalled him to his native country (802). He was the only remaining prince of the house of Cerdic, and by the West-Saxon thanes his claim was unanimously acknowledged.

Egbert devoted the commencement of his reign to the cultivation of peace and the improvement of his people. It was not till 809 that he unsheathed the sword: but from that period each succeeding year was marked by new victories and conquests. He repeatedly invaded and appropriated to himself a portion of the territory of the ancient Britons, and the natives of Cornwall, exhausted by numerous defeats, reluctantly submitted to the conqueror. The East Angles, by entreaties and presents, induced him to make war upon the Mercians. The two armies met at Ellandun (823), on the banks of the Willy; and Beornwulf, after an obstinate resistance, yielded to his adversary, who overran the feeble kingdoms of Kent and Essex, and united them to his own dominions. Beornwulf and, after him, his successor,

[823-828 A.D.]

Ludecan, sought to wreak their vengeance on the East Angles. Both lost their lives in the fruitless attempt; and Wiglaf, who next ascended the throne, had scarcely grasped the sceptre when he was compelled to drop it at the approach of the West Saxons. Unable to collect an army, he endeavoured to elude the pursuit of the invaders; wandered for three years in the forests and marshes; and during four months obtained a secure retreat in the cell of Ætheldrida, the daughter of Offa, who lived a recluse in the church of Croyland. Time and the entreaties of the abbot Siward mitigated the resentment of Egbert, who at last permitted Wiglaf to retain the sceptre [of Mercia] on condition that he should pay an annual tribute, and swear fealty to the king of Wessex. By the submission of the Mercians and of the East Angles, Egbert found himself on the frontiers of Northumbria (828) which was already subdued by the terror of his name. The chieftains, with Eanfrid at their head, met him at Dore, acknowledged him for their lord, and gave hostages for their obedience. Thence he directed his arms against the Britons, penetrated through the heart of North Wales, and planted his victorious standard in the Isle of Anglesea. Thus in the space of nineteen years did Egbert, by his policy and victories, extend the authority of Wessex over the greater part of the island.[1]

EGBERT
(From an old print)

Scarcely, however, had the king attained this superiority over the native princes, when he saw himself assailed by a foreign and most dangerous enemy. At this period the peninsula of Jutland, the islands of the Baltic, and the shores of the Scandinavian peninsula were the birthplace of a race of men, who, like the Saxons of old, spent the best portion of their lives on the waves, despised the tranquil enjoyments of peace, and preferred the acquisitions of rapine to the laborious profits of industry. Their maritime situation familiarised them with the dangers of the ocean; and an absurd law of succession, which universally prevailed among a multitude of chieftains, consigned the majority of their children to the profession of piracy. The eldest son obtained the whole patrimony of his family: the rest of the brothers received no other inheritance than their swords and ships, with which they were expected to acquire reputation and riches. Till the eighth century these sea-kings confined their depredations to the northern seas: but they had heard of the wealthy provinces in the south; and the success of their attempts incited

[1 Green, in closing his *Making of England*, says that the subsequent struggles never wholly undid the work which the sword of Egbert had accomplished, and that "from the moment the Northumbrian thegns bowed to their West Saxon overlord, England was made in fact if not in name."]

them to engage in more distant and important expeditions. Their first attempts were directed against the British Isles: next they desolated the coasts of France and Spain; at last they sailed through the straits which divide Europe from Africa, and taught the shores of the Mediterranean to tremble at the names of the Danes and Northmen.[1] The establishment of a Danish dynasty in England, of the duchy of Normandy in France, and afterwards of a powerful kingdom in Italy, bears sufficient testimony to their courage, their activity, and their perseverance.[b]

The Danes were not a people altogether foreign to the English; they were of kindred race and spoke a kindred tongue. Had their inroads begun when the settlements of Angles, Saxons, and Jutes were still new, they might have passed for a fourth branch of the same stock, come to share the spoil with their kinsfolk. As it was, their nearness in blood and speech made them disposed to accept a new religion at the hands of the English, and in the end to merge their own national being in that of the English, in a way in which the English themselves had been in no way disposed to do towards the wholly foreign races among whom they settled.[q]

Of their descents in England during the eighth century three only are recorded, one on the Isle of Thanet (787 A.D.) and two on the coast of Northumbria. If these attempts produced a temporary alarm, they furnished no cause of permanent uneasiness. But towards the close of the reign of Egbert, the numbers of the pirates perpetually increased, and their visits were annually renewed. In 832 they landed in the Isle of Sheppey, conveyed away the plunder, and returned home without molestation. The next year a fleet of five-and-thirty sail entered the mouth of the Dart, and Egbert had the mortification to see his West Saxons turn their backs to the invaders. Convinced of the necessity of preparation, he summoned all his vassals to meet him in London, explained to them the measures which he had resolved to adopt, and waited in anxious suspense for the next descent of the enemy. They landed on the coast of Cornwall (836), where, by the offers of friendship, they seduced the Britons from their allegiance, and at Hengests' Down encountered with united forces the men of Wessex. The king commanded in person; and a bloody but decisive victory restored the glory of his arms, crushed the rebellion of the Britons, and compelled the invaders to seek refuge in their ships. This was the last exploit of Egbert, who died (839), after a long, glorious, and fortunate reign.

ÆTHELWULF AND HIS SONS

Egbert, about the middle of his reign, had moulded the petty kingdoms of Kent, Essex, and Sussex into one government, which he gave to his elder son, Æthelwulf, with the title of king. Æthelwulf, on the death of his father (839), succeeded to the higher throne of Wessex, and transferred this subordinate kingdom to his son Æthelstan.

Of this monarch it has frequently been observed that he was fitter to wear the cowl than to wield the sceptre. The education of his early years had been confided to Swithin, provost of Winchester, and the care of the

[1 A distinction must be noted between the Danes and the Northmen. Freeman says that the Scandinavian settlements in England were almost wholly Danish in the stricter sense, and only in the northern part of the island are invasions of actual Northmen recorded. "The name Northmen at an earlier time," says Freeman,[q] "meant the Scandinavian nations generally; it is now specially used to mean the men of Norway."]

tutor was repaid by Egbert with the office of royal chaplain. From the lessons of his preceptor, the young prince was removed to study the military art under the auspices of his father; and after the victory of Ellandun, he commanded the army which expelled Baldred, king of Kent, from his dominions, and annexed that province, with Surrey and Essex, to the ancient patrimony of the house of Cerdic. As soon as he had mounted the throne, he bestowed upon his former tutor the vacant bishopric of Winchester; but retained at the head of the council the experienced bishop of Sherborne. The incessant and desultory invasions of the Northmen suggested the propriety of appointing officers in the maritime districts, who, on the first alarm, might collect the inhabitants, and oppose the landing or progress of the enemy; and this arrangement, though, by dividing the force of the country, it lessened the chance of victory, generally succeeded in confining the depredations of the invaders to the vicinity of the coast. The whole island was now surrounded by their squadrons (840). While one occupied the attention of Æthelwulf, a second of thirty-three sail entered the port of Southampton, and soon afterwards a third effected a landing on the Isle of Portland. Of the king's success we are not informed. Wulfhere defeated the invaders at Southampton, but Æthelhelm was slain at Portland with many of the men of Dorset. The next spring a powerful army landed in Lincolnshire. The ealdorman Herebryht, with his followers, perished in the marshes, and the barbarians pushed their victorious career through East Anglia to the Thames. The following year three bloody battles were fought at Rochester, Canterbury, and London; and Æthelwulf himself was defeated in an action at Charmouth.

Whether it was that the pirates were discouraged by the obstinate resistance which they experienced, or that France, now become the theatre of intestine feuds and fraternal ambition, offered a more inviting prospect, they appear to have abandoned Britain for the next ten years. But in 851 several squadrons returned to the island. One army had landed the preceding autumn in the Isle of Thanet, and had passed the winter on shore, a circumstance which filled the Saxons with consternation, as it seemed to denote a design of permanent conquest. In the spring a fleet of three hundred and fifty sail ascended the Thames; Canterbury and London were sacked, and Beorhtulf, the tributary king of Mercia, was defeated. The barbarians turned to Surrey, where Æthelwulf with his West Saxons waited to receive them at Ockley. The battle that ensued was most obstinate and sanguinary. The victory remained to Æthelwulf, and the loss of the Northmen is said to have been greater than they had ever sustained in any age or country. The other divisions of the Saxon forces were equally successful. Ceorl, with the men of Devon, defeated the barbarians at Wenbury, and Æthelstan, king of Kent, captured nine of their ships in an engagement near Sandwich. So many victories gave to this the name of the prosperous year; and the Northmen, disheartened by their losses, respected during the remainder of Æthelwulf's reign the shores of Britain.

The pious curiosity which had induced so many of the Saxon princes and prelates to visit the city of Rome, was not yet extinguished in the breasts of their posterity. The bishop of Winchester had lately performed the journey, and had been accompanied by Alfred, the youngest and best-beloved of the sons of Æthelwulf, a boy in the fifth year of his age.[1] The prince was

[1 The generally accepted date of Alfred's birth on the authority of Asser[u] is 849, which would make him only four years old at the time of his first journey to Rome. In another place, however, Asser tells us that Alfred was ten years old at this time and this statement is taken as more nearly probable by Ramsay,[f] who, therefore, sets 842 as the year of his birth.

honourably received by the pontiff, Leo IV, who, at the request of his father, conferred on him the regal unction, and the sacrament of confirmation. In 855 the tranquillity which England enjoyed encouraged Æthelwulf to undertake the same journey. Attended by a splendid retinue, the royal pilgrim, with his son Alfred, crossed the channel, visited the most celebrated churches of Gaul, and was sumptuously entertained at the court of Charles the Bald, king of France. At Rome he spent several months, rebuilt the school or hospital of the Saxons, which had lately been burnt, made numerous presents to the pope, and solicited an ordinance that no Englishman should be condemned to do penance in irons out of his own country. On his return he again visited the French monarch, and after a courtship of three months was married to his daughter Judith, who probably had not yet reached her twelfth year. The ceremony was performed by Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims. At the conclusion the princess was crowned and seated on a throne by the side of her husband, a distinction which she afterwards claimed, to the great displeasure of the West Saxons.

Ancient writers have not mentioned to whom Æthelwulf had intrusted the reins of government during his absence. But Æthelbald, his eldest son, a prince of impetuous passions and insatiable ambition, conceived the design of seizing the throne for himself, and of holding it in defiance of his father. His advisers and accomplices were Ealstan, the celebrated bishop of Sherborne, and Eanwulf, the ealdorman of Somerset. In the forest of Selwood the project was disclosed to some of the more powerful thanes, whose approbation appeared to insure its success. But at the return of Æthelwulf (856) the tide of popularity flowed in his favour; the majority of the nation condemned the treason of an unnatural son, and a civil war would have been the consequence had not the moderation of the king consented to a partition of his dominions. He resigned to Æthelbald the kingdom of Wessex, and contented himself with the provinces which [his son] Æthelstan, who died in 853, had governed with the title of king. He survived this compromise but two years. By his will, which was confirmed in a general assembly of the thanes, he left that share of the kingdom still in his possession to his second son, Æthelberht.[1] He died in 857.

After the death of Æthelwulf, Æthelbald continued to sit on the throne of Wessex: Æthelberht, in pursuance of his father's will, assumed the government of Kent, Essex, Sussex, and Surrey. The new king had been the foremost to condemn the marriage of Æthelwulf with the daughter of the French monarch: he now forgot his former enmity to the princess, and took the young widow to his own bed. This incestuous connection scandalised the people of Wessex: their disapprobation was publicly and loudly expressed; and the king, overawed by the remonstrances of the bishop of Winchester, consented to a separation.

In the battles which were fought during the life of Æthelwulf, Æthelbald had acquired peculiar distinction. During his own reign, either he possessed no opportunity of displaying his courage, or the memory of his exploits has been obliterated. Yet his martial character so endeared him to the youth of Wessex, that they lamented his death as a national calamity. He died in 860.

"This," concludes Ramsay, "is intelligible: a mission to Rome at four years of age passes belief. Again, if we take Alfred to have been eleven years old in 853, the story about his mother and the book harmonises with the statement that he began to read when he was twelve. That would be after his first visit to Rome."]

[1] [A bequest of three hundred mancusses a year to the pope may have been the beginning of the later *Romefeoh* or Peter's Pence. One mancus equalled one-fourth of a mark, two of which at that time made a pound.]

[860-865 A.D.]

According to some writers, the crown of Wessex, agreeably to the provisions contained in the testament of Æthelwulf, ought, on the demise of the last king, to have descended to Æthelred, the third of the brothers. But Æthelberht, who had hitherto possessed the kingdom of Kent, advanced the claim of seniority, and his pretensions were admitted by the great council of Wessex. His martial virtues are said to have been equal to those of his late brother: and the title of "invincible conqueror" was accorded to him by the admiration or flattery of his contemporaries. Yet the meagre chronicles of the times contain no record of his victories; and we are only told that his reign was short, and that he died in 865.

Under this prince the city of Winchester was sacked by the Northmen, who, as they conveyed the plunder to Southampton, were defeated with great slaughter by the ealdormen of Hampshire and Berkshire. Another army landed in the Isle of Thanet, and sold to the men of Kent their forbearance for a considerable sum of money. But they laughed at the credulity of the purchasers; and the eastern moiety of the province was pillaged and depopulated by the faithless barbarians.

It was also during his reign that an event occurred in the north which endangered by its consequences the very existence of the Saxons as a nation. Among the sea-kings, one of the most adventurous and successful was Ragnar Lodbrok.[1] On the shores of the Baltic, in the Orkneys, and the Hebrides, in Ireland, Scotland, and Northumbria, he had diffused the terror of his name. In France the intrepid pirate had conducted his fleet up the Seine, spread the flames of devastation on each side of its banks, and taken possession of the city of Paris, which was redeemed from destruction by the payment of seven thousand pounds of silver. By his orders ships of a larger size than had hitherto been navigated by his countrymen were constructed for an invasion of England: but, whether it was owing to the violence of the weather, or the unskilfulness of the mariners, they were wrecked on the coast of Northumbria. Ragnar with several of his followers reached the shore, and heedless of the consequences, commenced the usual career of depredation. Though the Northumbrians had cast off the yoke imposed on them by Egbert, their country was torn by civil dissensions; and at this very moment they were divided by the opposite pretensions of two competitors, Osbert and Ælla. At the first news of the descent of the Northmen, the latter flew to the coast, fought with the plunderers, made Ragnar prisoner, and immediately put him to death. He is said to have been devoured by snakes, and to have consoled his last moments with the hope that "the cubs of the boar" would avenge his fate. Nor was he disappointed. His sons, who were in Denmark, swore to punish the murderer; the relations, the friends, and the admirers of the deceased chieftain crowded to their standard; and eight sea-kings, with twenty jarls, combined their forces in the pursuit of revenge and plunder.

By the death of Æthelberht the crown of Wessex had devolved on Æthelred, the third of the sons of Æthelwulf. About the same time the northern armament, conveying several thousand warriors, under the command of Ivar and Ubba, reached the coast of East Anglia. They landed without opposition; but finding their number unequal to the enterprise which they

[1] [The story of Ragnar Lodbrok, or Lodbrog, and his sons, Healfdene and Ivar, the first leaders of the Northmen whose names have come down to us, is so clouded in legend and romance that it is wellnigh impossible to discover exactly what they accomplished. With their invasions, says Ramsay, we have at any rate "the first unquestionable appearance of the Danes proper in Great Britain" as distinguished from the rovers of the Scandinavian peninsula.]

had undertaken, they fortified their camp, and patiently awaited the arrival of reinforcements from the Baltic. The winter was spent in procuring horses for the army, and in debauching the fidelity of some among the Northumbrian chieftains. In February they abandoned East Anglia, and by the 1st of March were in possession of York. Alarmed for their country, Osbert and Ælla postponed the decision of their private quarrel, and united their forces against the common enemy. On the 21st of March they surprised the Danes in the neighbourhood of York, drove them into the city, and made a breach in the walls. They had penetrated into the streets, when despair redoubled the efforts of the Northmen, and the assailants were in their turn compelled to retire. Osbert, with the bravest of the Northumbrians, was slain; Ælla had the misfortune to fall alive into the hands of his enemies, who enjoyed the exquisite delight of torturing the man who had slain Ragnar. His ribs were divided from the spine; his lungs were drawn through the opening, and salt was thrown into the wounds. This victory gave the Danes an undisputed possession of the country south of the Tyne; the natives on the north of that river solicited the friendship of the invaders, and, with their consent, conferred the sovereign power on a chieftain called Ecgberht.

The army of the barbarians now divided itself into two bodies. The smaller remained at York to cultivate the country; the more numerous marched to the south, and took possession of Nottingham. Burhred, king of Mercia, immediately solicited the assistance of Æthelred, who, with his brother Alfred and the forces of Wessex, joined the Mercian army. The enemy prudently confined themselves within the walls of the town, and the besiegers were unable to force them to a battle. At length Nottingham was surrendered by capitulation, and the Danes retired without molestation to their countrymen at York.

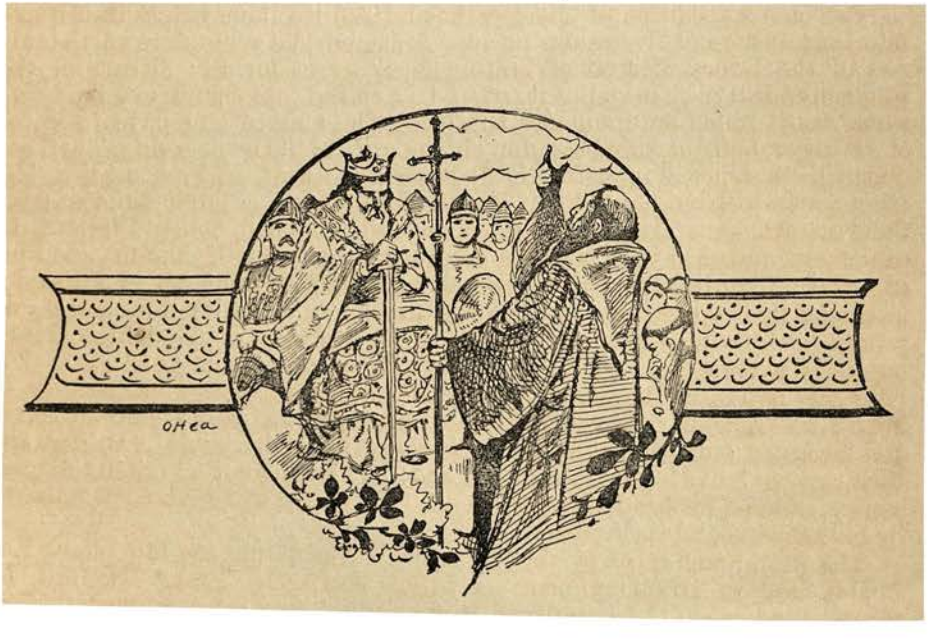
The next expedition of the Northmen (870) led them across the Humber into Lincolnshire. The Saxon princes remained idle spectators of the progress of the Danes, instead of uniting their forces for the defence of their common country. They appear to have conceived that the fury of the torrent would, as it rolled on, gradually subside. The king of Mercia had seen one of his most opulent provinces for six months in their possession, and yet, under the pretence of opposing the Britons in the west, had not made a single effort for its deliverance. From Mercia the invaders entered the country of the East Angles. They had already burned Thetford, when Ulfketul, the ealdorman, retarded their advance for a few days. But Eadmund, the king, conscious of his inability to contend against superior numbers, and afraid of inflaming their resentment by a fruitless resistance, disbanded his forces, and retired towards his castle of Framlingham. He was intercepted at Hoxne, on the Waveney, and conducted in chains to the quarters of Ivar. The proposals of the sea-king were rejected by the captive as repugnant to his honour and religion. To extort his compliance, he was bound naked to a tree and lacerated with whips; some of the spectators, with cruel dexterity, shot their arrows into his arms and legs; and the Dane, wearied out by his constancy, ordered his head to be struck off. Eadmund was revered as a martyr by his subjects and their posterity.

The winter was spent by the Northmen in regulating the fate of the East Angles, and in arranging plans of future conquest. From Thetford, the general rendezvous, Ivar returned to his former associates in Northumbria; Guthrum assumed the sceptre of East Anglia, which, from that period (871) became a Danish kingdom, and Healfdene and Bacsecg, leading the more adventurous of the invaders into Wessex, surprised the town of Reading.

[871 A.D.]

They fortified the place, and, to strengthen their position, began on the third day to open a trench from the Thames to the Kennet; but the ealdorman Æthelwulf attacked them at Englefield, killed one of their commanders, and drove the workmen into the camp. Four days later Æthelred and his brother Alfred arrived with the army of Wessex. The parties, which the pursuit of plunder had led to a distance, were easily put to flight; but in an attempt to storm the Danish intrenchments the Saxons experienced a loss, which taught them to respect the skill as well as the valour of the invaders. Æthelred, however, sensible that his crown was at stake, reinforced his army, and, before the end of the week, met the enemy at Æscesdune. The night was spent on each side in preparation for the combat; the morning discovered the Danes assembled in two divisions on different parts of an eminence. Æthelred ordered the Saxons to adopt a similar arrangement, and retired to his tent to assist at mass. The impatience of Alfred condemned the piety of his brother, and ordering his men to cover their heads with their shields, he boldly led them up the declivity, and attacked one of the hostile divisions. Æthelred followed quickly with the remainder of the army, and the Northmen, after a most obstinate resistance, were routed, and pursued in confusion as far as Reading (871).

Within a fortnight after the last sanguinary conflict, another was fought at Basing, in which the invaders took an ample revenge. Their numbers were soon after increased by the arrival of another armament from the Baltic, and a most obstinate battle ensued at Merton, in Surrey. The Saxon chroniclers give the advantage to their countrymen, but acknowledge that the Danes remained in possession of the field. Æthelred, who had been wounded, survived only a few days.[b]



CHAPTER III

ALFRED AND HIS SUCCESSORS

[871–1017 A.D.]

"A SAINT without superstition, a scholar without ostentation, a warrior all whose wars were fought in defence of his country, a conqueror whose laurels were never stained with cruelty, a prince never cast down by adversity, never lifted up to insolence in the hour of triumph—there is no other name in history to compare with his." In these words Freeman[i] pays tribute to the greatness of Alfred. It demanded, indeed, all the unswerving devotion to a high ideal of kingship, such as few sovereigns of that time or any time have possessed, to undertake the leadership of the West Saxons on the death of Æthelred. For it was rather to the leadership of a people, already despairing of the outcome of the struggle in which they were engaged, than to the throne of a real nation, that Alfred succeeded. He had, we are told, as a prince of the royal house, been possessed of a subordinate authority during the brief and stormy reigns of his elder brothers. *Secundarius* is the term which his biographer Asser *f* [1] applies to him, but of the real meaning of the word we have no further explanation.[a]

Alfred was already so much distinguished, both by his good sense and valour, that he might, had he chosen to do so, have obtained the title of king of Wessex, to the prejudice of Æthelred; but he did not covet the dignity;

[1 The "*Life*" of Alfred attributed to the pen of Asser,*f* a contemporary and friend, is the principal authority for his reign. Thomas Wright,*p* in his *Biographia Britannica Literaria*, disputed the authenticity of the work, but other scholars have generally accepted it. Pauli,*m* in a critical examination of the text, has, however, pointed out numerous later interpolations and emendations. Earle,*a* in the introduction to his edition of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, concludes that "No theory of authorship or date of the work has ever been proposed which, on the whole, meets the facts of the case better than that set forth in the book itself, that it was written in 893," during the prime of Alfred's life.]

[871 A.D.]

and, when, upon the decease of his brother, the voice of the nobles and people designated him as Æthelred's successor, he unwillingly accepted the laborious honour. In those days, royalty, never an easy or enviable station, was accompanied by great danger and toil. A king was compelled to sleep on the hard ground, to encounter every privation and difficulty, and to expose his life for the defence of his crown and people; and, had Alfred been a sluggard, it might have been supposed that love of ease rendered him unwilling to undertake an office of so much peril. But his conduct, both before and after his accession, disproves this supposition; and we may, therefore, fully believe that he was actuated by the motive assigned for his reluctance, and transmitted to us by Asser, his biographer and friend. He knew that he could not be furthered in his attempts to govern well, except by the continual aid of providence; and he feared that such help might not be granted unto him. With this full sense and conviction of his own utter weakness and inability to help himself, did Alfred begin his reign, during which he was enabled to acquire a better reputation than any other monarch of western Christendom.[b]

KING ALFRED

Another point with regard to the succession should be noticed. On the death of Æthelred, Alfred succeeded, though Æthelred had children living. This is, of course, simply an instance of the general law of choosing from the royal house, but of choosing only one who was personally qualified to reign. Minors were therefore passed by, as a matter of course, in favor of a full-grown uncle or other kinsman. The children thus shut out might or might not be chosen at some future vacancy. The right of Alfred to his crown was not disputed in his own day, nor has he commonly been branded by later historians with the name of usurper. But it is well to bear in mind that his succession was of exactly the same kind as that of some later kings to whom the name of usurper has been freely applied. In all such cases the mistake comes from forgetting that the strict laws of succession to which we have been used for the last two or three centuries were altogether unknown in the earlier stages of our constitution.[i]

[The extent of territory over which the Danes exercised at least potential authority is indicative of the strength of the power with which the new king had to cope.] They held the Isle of Thanet, which gave them the command of the river Thames and the coasts of Kent and Essex; they had thoroughly overrun or conquered all Northumbria, from the Tweed to the Humber; they had planted strong colonies at York, which city, destroyed during the wars, they rebuilt. South of the Humber, with the exception of the Isle of Thanet, their iron grasp on the soil was less sure, but they had desolated Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, and Suffolk; and, with numbers constantly increasing, they ranged through the whole length of the island, on this side of the Tweed, with the exception only of the western counties of England, and had established fortified camps between the Severn and the Thames. The Anglo-Saxon standard had been gradually retreating

towards the southwestern corner of our island, which includes Somersetshire, Devonshire, and Cornwall, and which was now about to become the scene of Alfred's most romantic adventures. For a while, the English expected the arrival of their foes during the spring and summer months, and their departure at the close of autumn; but now a Danish army had wintered seven years in the land, and there was no longer a hope of the blessing of their ever departing from it.

But Alfred, the saviour of his people, did not despair, even when worse times came: he calmly abode the storm over which his valour, but still more his prudence, skill, and wisdom, finally triumphed. Though only twenty-three years of age, he had been already tried in many battles. He had scarcely been a month on the throne when his army, very inferior in force to that of the Danes, was forced into a general engagement at Wilton. After fighting desperately through a great part of the day, the heathens fled; but seeing the fewness of those who pursued, they set themselves to battle again, and got the field.[c]

Alfred at once rallied his forces, and again within the month met the Danes in battle. Throughout the entire first year of his reign the conflict raged—nine battles in all were fought, the chroniclers tell us—and in every one Alfred was worsted. But the losses of the Danes were by no means small, and they were probably willing enough to accept a truce. Alfred, in his extremity, took counsel with his witan, and on their advice—offered—with what grief and shame we can imagine—to buy a brief respite for his people. For three years they left him unmolested.

The peace gave the Danes the opportunity to turn to the conquest of other fields, and it was upon Mercia that they next fell. In the spring of 874, reinforced by fresh bands from the north, they burst into the land of the Mercians with more than their accustomed fury. There was no withstanding them. King Burhred tried to buy a peace as Alfred had done. The Danes accepted his gold, but continued their depredations. Burhred, despairing of ever ridding his country of the conquerors, abandoned his throne and fled across the sea, where broken in health and in spirit he died at Rome before the end of the year. The Danes set up a puppet king, Ceolwulf by name, who did their bidding, and paid them tribute which he extorted from his down-trodden countrymen, for the space of three years. At the end of that period his masters, tiring of the farce of his rule, swept him from his throne. He was the last to bear the independent title of king of the Mercians.[a]

The next year (875) one army, under Halfden, or Halfdane, was employed in settling Northumbria, and in waging war with that mixed population that still dwelt in Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Galloway, or what was called the kingdom of Strathclyde. They now came into hostile collision with the Scots, who were forced to retreat beyond the Firths of Clyde and Forth. Halfdane then divided the mass of the Northumbrian territory among his followers, who, settling among the Anglo-Saxons there, and intermarrying with them, became, in the course of a few generations, so mixed as to form almost one people. It is not easy, from the vagueness of the old writers, to fix limits; but this fusion was probably felt strongest along the northeastern coast, between the Tees and the Tweed, where some Danish peculiarities are still detected among the people. While Halfdane was pursuing these measures in the north, a still stronger army, commanded by three kings, marched upon Cambridge, which they fortified and made their winter quarters. By this time the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Northumbria, Mercia, and East Anglia were entirely obliterated, and the contest lay between the Danes and Alfred's men of Wessex.

[876 A.D.]

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE ENGLISH NAVY

At the opening of the year 876 the host that had wintered in Cambridge took to their ships, and, resolving to carry the war they had renewed into the heart of Wessex, they landed on the coast of Dorsetshire, surprised the castle of Wareham, and scoured the neighbouring country. But in the interval of the truce, Alfred's mind had conceived an idea which may be looked upon as an embryo of the naval glory of England. After their establishment in our island, the Saxons, who, at their first coming, were as nautical a people as the Danes, imprudently neglected sea affairs; but in his present straits Alfred saw the advantages to be derived from the employment of ships along the coast, where they might either prevent the landing of an enemy, or cut off their supplies and reinforcements, which generally came by sea, and as frequently from the Continent as elsewhere. The first flotilla he launched was small, and almost contemptible; but in its very first encounter with the enemy it proved victorious, attacking a Danish squadron of seven ships, one of which was taken, the rest put to flight. This happened immediately after the surprise of Wareham; and when, in a few days, the Danes agreed to treat for peace, and evacuate the territory of Wessex, the consequences of the victory were magnified in the eyes of the people. In concluding this peace, after the Danish chiefs or kings had sworn by their golden bracelets—a most solemn form of oath with them—Alfred insisted that they should swear upon the relics of some Christian saints. The Danes swore by both, and the very next night fell upon Alfred as he was riding with a small force, and suspecting no mischief, towards the town of Winchester. The king had a narrow escape; the horsemen who attended him were nearly all dismounted and slain; and, seizing their horses, the Danes galloped off in the direction of Exeter, whither, as they were no doubt informed, another body of their brethren were proceeding, having come round by sea, and landed at the mouth of the Exe. Their plan now was to take Alfred in the rear of his stronghold in the west of England, and to rouse again the people [Britons] of Cornwall against the Saxons. A formidable Danish fleet sailed from the mouth of the Thames to reinforce the troops united in Devonshire; but Alfred's infant navy, strengthened by some new vessels, stood ready to intercept it. A storm which arose caused the wreck of half the Danish ships on the Hampshire coast; and when the others arrived, tardily and in a shattered condition, they were met by the Saxon fleet that blockaded the Exe, and entirely destroyed, after a gallant action. Before this, his second sea victory, Alfred had come up with his land forces and invested Exeter, and King Guthrum, the Dane who held that town, on learning the destruction of his fleet, capitulated, gave hostages and oaths, and marched with his Northmen from Exeter and the kingdom of Wessex into Mercia. Alfred had now felt the value of the fleet he had created, and which, weak as it was, maintained his cause on the sea during the retreat to which he was now about to be condemned. The crews of these ships, however, must have been oddly constituted; for, not finding English mariners enough, he engaged a number of Friesland pirates, or rovers, to serve him. These men did their duty gallantly and faithfully. It is curious to reflect that they came from the same country which, ages before, had sent forth many of the Angles to the conquest of Britain; and they may have felt, even at that distance of time, a strong sympathy with the Anglo-Saxon adherents of Alfred.

THE PROSTRATION OF WESSEX

Guthrum had no sooner retreated from Exeter than he began to prepare for another war, and this he did with great art, and by employing all his means and influence, for he had learned to appreciate the qualities of his enemy, and he was himself the most skilful, steady, and persevering of all the invaders. He fixed his headquarters at no greater distance from Alfred than the city of Gloucester, around which he had broad and fertile lands to distribute among his warriors. His fortunate "raven" attracted the birds of rapine from every quarter; and when everything was ready for a fresh incursion into the west, he craftily proceeded in a new and unexpected manner. A winter campaign had hitherto been unknown among the Danes, but on the first day of January, 878, his choicest warriors received a secret order to meet him on horseback at an appointed place. Alfred was at Chippenham, a strong residence of the Wessex kings. It was the feast of the Epiphany, or Twelfth Night, and the Saxons were probably celebrating the festival when they heard that Guthrum and his Danes were at the gates. Surprised thus by the celerity of an overwhelming force, they could offer but an ineffectual resistance. Many were slain; the foe burst into Chippenham, and Alfred, escaping with a little band, retired, with an anxious mind, to the woods and the fastnesses of the moors. As the story is generally told, the king could not make head against the Danes, but other accounts state that he immediately fought several battles in rapid succession. We are inclined to the latter belief, which renders the broken spirits and despair of the men of Wessex more intelligible; but all are agreed in the facts that, not long after the Danes stole into Chippenham, they rode over the kingdom of Wessex, where no army was left to oppose them; that numbers of the population fled to the Isle of Wight and the opposite shores of the Continent, while those who remained tilled the soil for their hard taskmasters, the Danes, whom they tried to conciliate with presents and an abject submission. The brave men of Somerset alone retained some spirit, and continued, in the main, true to their king; but even in their country, where he finally sought a refuge, he was obliged to hide in fens and coverts, for fear of being betrayed to his powerful foe, Guthrum. Near the confluence of the rivers Tone and Parret there is a tract of country still called Athelney, or the Prince's Island. In the time of Alfred the whole tract was covered by a dense wood, the secluded haunt of deer, wild boars, wild goats, and other beasts of the forest. It has now long ceased to be an island; but in those days, where not washed by the two rivers, it was insulated by bogs and inundations, which could only be passed in a boat. In this secure lurking-place the king abode some time, making himself a small hold or fortress there. For sustenance he and his few followers depended upon hunting and fishing, and the spoil they could make by sudden and secret forays among the Danes. From an ambiguous expression of some of the old writers, we might believe he sometimes plundered his own subjects; and this is not altogether improbable, if we consider his pressing wants, and the necessity under which he lay of concealing who he was. This secret seems to have been most scrupulously kept by his few adherents, and to have been maintained on his own part with infinite patience and forbearance.[c]

From among the stories of the dark days in the Somerset marshes that have come down to us, one at least has found a place in English history from

[878 A.D.]

which no scholarly criticism or antiquarian research can dislodge it. Every schoolboy knows the "story of the cakes," but it is worth repeating in the simple words of Asser.[1] During this time, the chronicler tells us, the king was long concealed in the hut of one of his cowherds. "It happened one day that the countrywoman, the wife of this cowherd, was baking some cakes for food, while the king was sitting before the fire and repairing his bows and arrows and instruments of war. When the unlucky woman saw that the cakes which had been placed on the fire were burning, she ran up in great haste and removed them, and scolded our invincible king after this fashion: 'Look, man, the cakes are burning, and you do not take the trouble to turn them; when the time for eating them comes, then you are active enough.' This unlucky woman little thought her guest was Alfred who had fought so many battles against the pagans, and who had gained so many victories."[a]

THE CAMPAIGN OF 878 A.D.

From his all but inaccessible retreat in Athelney, the king maintained a correspondence with some of his faithful adherents. By degrees a few bold warriors gathered round him in that islet, which they more strongly fortified, as a point upon which to retreat in case of reverse; and between the Easter and Whitsuntide following his flight (878), Alfred saw hopes of his emerging from obscurity. The men of Somersetshire, Wiltshire, Dorsetshire, and Hampshire began to flock in; and, with a resolute force, Alfred was soon enabled to extend his operations against the Danes. In the interval, an important event in Devonshire had favoured his cause. Ubba, in attempting to land there, was slain, with 800 or 900 of his followers, and their magical banner, a raven, which had been embroidered in one noon-tide by the hands of the three daughters of the great Lodbrok, fell into the hands of the Saxons. Soon after receiving the welcome news at Athelney, the king determined to convert his skirmishes and loose partisan warfare into more decisive operations. Previously to this, however, he was anxious to know the precise force and condition of the army which Guthrum kept together; and, to obtain this information, he put himself in great jeopardy, trusting to his own resources and address. He assumed the habit of a wandering minstrel, or gleeman, and with his instruments of music in his hands, gained a ready entrance into the camp, and the tents and pavilions of the Danes. As he amused these idle warriors with songs and interludes, he espied all their sloth and negligence, heard much of their counsels and plans, and was soon enabled to return to his friends at Athelney with a full and satisfactory account of the state and habits of that army. Then secret messengers were sent to all quarters, requesting the trusty men of Wessex to meet in arms at Egbert's Stone, on the east of Selwood Forest. The summons was obeyed, though most knew not the king had sent it; and when Alfred appeared at the place of rendezvous he was received with enthusiastic joy, the men of Hampshire, and Dorset, and Wilts rejoicing as if he had risen from death to life. In the battle of Ethandune [Heddington] which ensued seven weeks after Easter, the Danes were taken by surprise, and thoroughly beaten. Alfred's concealment, counting from his flight from Chippenham, did not last above five months.

[1 In this particular case it appears to be fairly well established that the story was not a part of the *Life* as originally written by Asser, but was a later interpolation. This, however, as pointed out by Gairdner,[o] in his *Early Chroniclers of England*, in no wise means that the incident is entirely apocryphal.]

THE TREATY OF CHIPPENHAM AND ITS RESULTS

Guthrum retreated with the mournful residue of his army to a fortified position. Alfred followed him thither, cut off all his communications, and established a close blockade. In fourteen days famine obliged the Danes to accept the conditions offered by the Saxons. These conditions were liberal; for, though victorious, Alfred could not hope to drive the Danes by one, nay, nor by twenty battles, out of England. They were too numerous, and had secured themselves in too considerable a part of the island. The first points insisted upon in the treaty were that Guthrum should evacuate all Wessex, and submit to baptism. Upon Guthrum's ready acceptance of these two conditions, an extensive cession of territory was made to him and the Danes; and here the great mind of Alfred probably contemplated the gradual fusion of two people—the Saxons and the Danes—who differed in but few essentials; and foresaw that the pursuits of agriculture and industry, growing up among them, after a tranquil settlement, would win the rovers of the north from their old plundering, piratical habits. As soon as this took place, they would guard the coast they formerly desolated. If it had even been in Alfred's power to expel them all (which it never was), he could have had no security against their prompt return and incessant attacks. There was territory enough, fertile, though neglected, to give away, without straitening the Saxons.

Alfred thus drew the line of demarcation between him and the Danes: "Let the bounds of our dominion stretch to the river Thames, and from thence to the water of Lea, even unto the head of the same water; and thence straight unto Bedford; and finally, going along by the river Ouse, let them end at Watling street." Beyond these lines, all the east side of the island, as far as the Humber, was surrendered to the Danes; and as they had established themselves in Northumbria, that territory was soon united, and the whole eastern country from the Tweed to the Thames, where it washes a part of Essex, took the name of the *Danelagh*, or "Dane-law," which it retained for many ages, even down to the time of the Norman conquest. The cession was large; but it should be remembered that Alfred, at the opening of his reign, was driven into the western corner of England, and that he now gained tranquil possession of five or perhaps ten times more territory than he then possessed. In many respects, these his moderate measures answered the end he proposed. Soon after the conclusion of the treaty, Guthrum, relying on the good faith of the Saxons, went with only thirty of his chiefs to Aulre, near Athelney. His old but gallant and generous enemy, Alfred, answered for him at the baptismal font, and the Dane was christened under the Saxon name of Athelstan. The next week the ceremony was completed with great solemnity at the royal town of Wedmore, and after spending twelve days as the guest of Alfred, Guthrum departed loaded with presents. Whatever were his inward convictions, or the efficacy and sincerity of his conversion, the Danish prince was certainly captivated by the merits of his victor, and ever after continued the faithful friend and ally, if not vassal, of Alfred. The subjects under his rule in the Danelagh assumed habits of industry and tranquillity, and gradually adopted the manners and customs of more civilised life. By mutual agreement, the laws of the Danes were assimilated to those of the Saxons; but the former long retained many of their old Scandinavian usages. All sales, whether of men, horses, or oxen, were declared illegal, unless the purchaser produced the voucher of the seller. This was to put a stop on both sides to the lifting of cattle, and the carrying off of the peasantry as

slaves. Both kings engaged to promote the Christian religion, and to punish apostasy. We are not well informed as to the progress the faith made among his subjects on Guthrum's conversion; but it was probably rapid, though imperfect, and accompanied with a lingering affection for the divinities of the Scandinavian mythology.[c]

EFFECTS OF THE DANISH SETTLEMENT

But in truth the Danish occupation of northern and eastern England did but make ready the way for the more thorough incorporation of those lands with the West-Saxon kingdom. Egbert had established his supremacy over the English powers in those lands. But it was the supremacy of an external master. The Danish settlements gave the West-Saxon kings a wholly new character. Unless we reckon the tributary kingship of Bernicia, all the ancient English kingdoms, with their royal houses, were swept away wherever the Danes established their power. The West-Saxon kings remained the only champions of Christian faith and English nationality. They were now kings of the English, and they alone. Mark also that, by the treaty between Alfred and Guthrum, while the West-Saxon king lost as an overlord, he gained as an immediate sovereign. The actual West-Saxon dominion, as distinguished from mere West-Saxon supremacy, again reached far beyond the Thames. English Mercia was ruled under Alfred by Æthelred, an ealdorman of the old royal stock, the husband of his daughter, the renowned Æthelflaed. The lord and lady of the Mercians held a place intermediate between that of an under-king and an ordinary ealdorman. At the other end of Wessex, Kent and Sussex were completely incorporated, and ceased to be even distinct appanages. The West-Saxon supremacy was more fully established in Wales, and at last, in 893, even the Danes of the north acknowledged it. Alfred had thus, in name at least, won back the overlordship of Egbert, combined with an enlarged immediate kingdom. As that immediate kingdom took in by far the greater part of Saxon England, and little or nothing that was not Saxon, he sometimes bears, neither the narrower style of king of the West Saxons nor the wider style of king of the English, but the title, almost peculiar and specially appropriate to himself, of king of the Saxons. His overlordship over the heathen Danes was doubtless far less firmly established than Egbert's overlordship had been over their Christian predecessors. But now, in the eyes of the Christian inhabitants of Northumberland and Mercia, the West-Saxon king was no longer a stranger and a conqueror. He had become the champion of their race and faith against their heathen masters.[j]

ENGLAND AFTER THE PEACE

But some time had yet to pass ere Alfred could give himself up to quiet enjoyments, to law-making, and the intellectual improvement of his people. Though Guthrum kept his contract, hosts of marauding Danes, who were not bound by it, continued to cross over from the Continent and infest the shores and rivers of England. In 879, the very year after Guthrum's treaty and baptism, a great army of pagans came from beyond the sea, and wintered at Fullanham, or Fulham, hard by the river Thames. From Fulham this host proceeded to Ghent, in the Low Countries. At this period the Northmen alternated their attacks on England, and their attacks on Holland, Belgium,

and east France, in a curious manner, the expedition beginning on one side of the British Channel and the North Sea, frequently ending on the other side. The rule of their conduct, however, seems to have been this—to persevere only against the weakest enemy. Thus, when they found France strong, they tried England; and when they found the force of England consolidated under Alfred, they turned off in the direction of France, or the neighbouring shores of the Continent.[c]

The cessation of raids, however, enabled Alfred to undertake the work of unifying his kingdom as it never had been unified, and of providing a system of defence of a truly national character. London, which had been sacked and destroyed during the wars with Guthrum, was rebuilt on a more extensive plan than ever and strongly fortified. In other parts of the kingdom, also, particularly along the coast, towers and fortifications were erected. The navy which he had begun to build a few years before was added to and improved, and a beginning was made in organising the defensive forces of the land.[a]

From measures of defence against a foreign enemy, the king turned his attention to the domestic economy of the country. During the long period of Danish devastation, the fabric of civil government had been nearly dissolved. The courts of judicature had been closed; injuries were inflicted without provocation, and retaliated without mercy, and the Saxon, like the Dane, had imbibed a spirit of insubordination, and a contempt for peace, and justice, and religion. To remedy these evils, Alfred restored, enlarged, and improved the salutary institutions of his forefathers; and from the statutes of Æthelberht, Ine, Offa, and other Saxon princes, composed a code of law, adapted to the circumstances of the time, and the habits of his subjects. But legislative enactments would have been of little avail had not the king insured their execution by an undertaking of no small difficulty, but which by his vigilance and perseverance he ultimately accomplished. The Saxon jurisprudence had established an ample gradation of judicatures, which diverged in different ramifications from the king's court into every hamlet in the kingdom; but of the persons invested with judicial authority very few were qualified for so important an office. Almost all were ignorant; many were despotic. The powerful refused to acquiesce in their decisions, and the defenceless complained of their oppression. Both had frequent recourse to the equity of Alfred, who listened as cheerfully to the complaints of the lowest as of the highest among his subjects. Every appeal was heard by him with the most patient attention; in cases of importance he revised the proceedings at his leisure, and the inferior magistrates trembled at the impartiality and severity of their sovereign. If their fault proceeded from ignorance or inadvertence, they were reprimanded or removed according to the magnitude of the offence; but neither birth, nor friends, nor power, could save the corrupt or malicious judge. He was made to suffer the punishment which he had unjustly inflicted, and, if we may believe an ancient authority [Andrew Horne's *Miroir des Justices*], forty-four magistrates were by the king's order executed in one year for their informal and iniquitous proceedings. This severity was productive of the most beneficial consequences. The judges were careful to acquire a competent degree of knowledge; their decisions became accordant to the law; the commission of crime was generally followed by the infliction of punishment; and theft and murder were rendered as rare as they had formerly been prevalent. To prove the reformation of his subjects, Alfred is said to have suspended valuable bracelets on the highway, which no one ventured to remove; and as a confirmation we are told [by William of Malmes-

[893 A.D.]

bury] that if a traveller lost his purse on the road he would at the distance of a month find it lying untouched in the same spot. These are probably the fictions of a posterior age; but they serve to show the high estimation in which Alfred's administration of justice was held by our forefathers.

The decline of learning in the Saxon states had been rapidly accelerated by the Danish invasions. The churches and monasteries, the only academies of the age, had been destroyed; and at the accession of Alfred, Wessex could hardly boast of a single scholar able to translate a Latin book into the English tongue. The king, who from his early years had been animated with the most ardent passion for knowledge, endeavoured to infuse a similar spirit into all who aspired to his favour. For this purpose he invited to his court the most distinguished scholars of his own and of foreign countries. Plegemund and Werfrith, Æthelstan and Werwulf, visited him from Mercia. John of Old Saxony left the monastery of Corvei for an establishment at Ethelingey. Asser of St. David's was induced by valuable presents to reside with the king during six months in the year; and an honourable embassy to Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims, returned with Grimbald, the celebrated provost of St. Omer. With their assistance Alfred began in his thirty-ninth year to apply to the study of Roman literature; and opened schools in different places for the instruction of his subjects. It was his will that the children of every free man, whose circumstances would allow it, should acquire the elementary arts of reading and writing; and that those who were designed for civil or ecclesiastical employments, should moreover be instructed in the Latin language.

It was a misfortune which the king frequently lamented, that Saxon literature contained no books of science. "I have often wondered," says he, "that the illustrious scholars, who once flourished among the English, and who had read so many foreign works, never thought of transferring the most useful into their own language." To supply the deficiency Alfred himself undertook the task. Of his translations two were historical, and two didactic. The first were the *Ecclesiastical History of the English* by Bede, and the epitome of Orosius, the best abridgment of ancient history then extant, both works calculated to excite and gratify the curiosity of his subjects. Of the others one was meant for general reading, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, by Boethius, a treatise deservedly held in high estimation at that period; and the second was destined for the instruction of the clergy, the *Pastoral* of Gregory the Great, a work recommended both by its own excellence and the reputation of its author. Of this he sent a copy to every bishop in his dominions, with a request that it might be preserved in the cathedral for the use of the diocesan clergy.

In the arrangement of his time, his finances, and his domestic concerns, Alfred was exact and methodical. The officers of his household were divided into three bodies, which succeeded each other in rotation, and departed at the end of the month, the allotted period of their service. Of each day he gave one-third to sleep and necessary refreshments: the remainder was divided between the duties of his station and works of piety and charity. His treasurer was ordered to separate his revenue into two moieties. The first he subdivided into three parts, of which one was destined to reward his servants and ministers, another to supply presents for the strangers who visited his court, and the third to pay the numerous bodies of workmen whom he employed. For he erected palaces in different parts of his dominions; repaired and embellished those which had been left by his predecessors, and rebuilt London and several other towns which the Danes had reduced to heaps of ruins. In all these undertakings we are told that he displayed an

improved taste and considerable magnificence. Among his artists were numbers of foreigners attracted by his offers and the fame of his liberality; and by frequent conversation with them he is said to have acquired a theoretical acquaintance with their respective professions which astonished the most experienced workmen.

The other moiety of his revenue was parcelled out into four portions. One was devoted to the support of his school, his favourite project. Another was given to the two monasteries which he had founded, one at Shaftesbury for nuns, at the head of whom he placed his daughter Æthelgiva; another at Ethelingey for monks, which he peopled with foreigners, because the Danish devastations had abolished the monastic institute among his own subjects. The third portion he employed in relieving the necessities of the indigent, to whom he was on all occasions a most bountiful benefactor. From the fourth he drew the alms, which he annually distributed to different churches. They were not confined to his own dominions, but scattered through Wales, Northumbria, Brittany (Armorica), and Gaul. Often he sent considerable presents to Rome; sometimes to the nations in the Mediterranean and to Jerusalem; on one occasion to the Indian Christians at Meliapur. Swithelm, the bearer of the royal alms, brought back to the king several oriental pearls, and aromatic liquors.[e]

The notion, so widely prevalent, that the education of Alfred had been neglected in his childhood, is a popular error, founded upon the monastic ideas of his biographer, Asser. In these early ages those children only were taught to read and write who were destined for the clerical order. This continued to be the case with the two classes of society (churchmen and laymen), long after the conversion of the Saxons; it was no part of the accomplishments of a prince to be able to write or to read, for with them learning and literature were intrusted to the memory, and in this respect we are sure that Alfred experienced no neglect. The learning of his father, and the influence of Swithun, are proofs that he could not want teachers; and Asser himself informs us that he was taught and excelled in all the accomplishments which became a prince. He spent much of his time in listening to the national poetry as sung by the minstrels of his father's household, and committed it to memory with great facility. He was skilful beyond his age in hunting and the use of arms. His early visits to Rome, the capital of western civilisation, must have tended to enlarge his mind. It is said that when he had reached his twelfth year, he had not yet been taught to read; yet, according to the anecdote related by Asser, in this point he was not inferior to his elder brothers. It appears that when Æthelwulf married the French princess Judith, Alfred's mother was set aside to make way for his step-mother, and it is probable that the children took her part and went with her. It was after his father's death and in his mother's house (not, as some have supposed, in that of his step-mother, who had then become his sister-in-law), that the following incident is said to have occurred. In his twelfth year, when he and his brothers were one day in their mother's presence, she showed them a splendid book of Anglo-Saxon poetry, an article then of great value, and she told them that she was ready to give it to him who should first make himself master of its contents, and commit them to memory. Alfred, attracted by the beauty of the initial letter, and already distinguished by his thirst for knowledge, accepted the challenge, took the book out of his mother's hand, and "went to his master and read it, and, having read it, he brought it back to his mother, and recited it."[f]

THE LAWS OF ALFRED

At a very early period the statement was put forward that Alfred had been in the truest sense of the word the lawgiver of his people. The designation strictly understood is erroneous—he introduced no new code of law; his labours consisted purely in re-establishing, renewing, and improving. Alfred found everywhere in his kingdom existing laws of which he could avail himself as a groundwork; but after the war of liberation, the organisation of new conditions, as well as the closer connection of the different constituent parts of the monarchy, and the elevation of the royal power, required a revision and sifting of the old laws; it became necessary to make preparations for a general system of legislation.

When Alfred commenced the work, he had before him the Kentish collection of Æthelberht and his successors: his own ancestor Ine had caused the West-Saxon laws to be inscribed; and in Mercia the code of the great Offa was adopted. Upon reviewing them he found, in all three, much which met with his full approval; with some things, however, he was not satisfied, and they were therefore expunged with the consent of his councillors. Nevertheless, he sometimes hesitated in replacing them by laws of his own because he could not tell whether they would be considered good by his successors. Ine's collection alone was completely included in the code. Alfred's motives in these reformatory proceedings were of two kinds, the changed and increased range of action of the royal power, and the strong desire felt by his own heart of infusing Christian convictions into the popular laws which had come down from paganism, and of making them their principal support. As soon as such traces are met with in his code, the spirit of Alfred is clearly observable. Alfred impressed upon the whole code the character much rather of his own mind than that of his age.[m]

THE INVASION OF HASTING

The siege of Paris, which began in 886, employed the Danes or Northmen two whole years. Shortly after the heathens burst into the country now called Flanders, which was then a dependency of the Frankish or French kings, and were employed there for some time in a difficult and extensive warfare. A horrid famine ensued in those parts of the Continent, and made the hungry wolves look elsewhere for sustenance and prey. England had now revived, by a happy repose of seven years; her corn-fields had borne their plentiful crops; her pastures, no longer swept by the tempests of war, were well sprinkled with flocks and herds; and those good fatted beeves, which were always dear to the capacious stomachs of the Northmen, made the island a very land of promise to the imagination of the famished. It is true that of late years they had found those treasures were well defended, and that nothing was to be got under Alfred's present government without hard blows, and a desperate contest, at least doubtful in its issue. But hunger impelled them forward; they were a larger body than had ever made the attack at once; they were united under the command of Hasting, a chief equal or superior in fame and military talent to any that had preceded him; and therefore the Danes, in the year 893, once more turned the prows of their vessels towards England. It was indeed a formidable fleet. As the men of Kent gazed seaward from their cliffs and downs, they saw the horizon darkened by it; as the

winds and waves wafted it forward, they counted 250 several ships; and every ship was full of warriors and horses brought from Flanders and France, for the immediate mounting of a rapid, predatory cavalry. The invaders landed near Romney Marsh, at the eastern termination of the great wood or weald of Anderida at the mouth of a river, now dry, called Limine. They towed their ships four miles up the river towards the weald, and there mastered a fortress the peasants of the country were raising in the fens. They then proceeded to Apuldre, or Appledore, at which point they made a strongly fortified camp, whence they ravaged the adjacent country for many miles. Nearly simultaneously with these movements, the famed Hasting, the skilful commander-in-chief of the entire expedition, entered the Thames with another division of eighty ships, landed at and took Milton, near Sittingbourne, and there threw up prodigiously strong intrenchments. Their past reverses had made them extremely cautious; and for nearly a whole year the Danes in either camp did little else than fortify their positions, and scour the country in foraging parties. Other piratical squadrons, however, kept hovering round our coasts, to distract attention and create alarm at many points at one and the same time. The honourable and trustworthy Guthrum had now been dead three years; and to complete the most critical position of Alfred, the Danes settled in the Danelagh, even from the Tweed to the Thames, violated their oaths, took up arms against him, and joined their marauding brethren under Hasting. It was in this campaign, or rather this succession of campaigns, which lasted altogether three years, that the military genius of the Anglo-Saxon monarch shone with its greatest lustre, and was brought into full play by the ability, the wonderful and eccentric rapidity, and the great resources of his opponent Hasting. To follow their operations the reader must place the map of England before him, for they ran over half of the island, and shifted the scene of war with almost as much rapidity as that with which the decorations of a theatre are changed.

ALFRED'S NEW MILITARY PLAN

The first great difficulty Alfred had to encounter was in collecting and bringing up sufficient forces to one point, and then in keeping them in adequate number in the field; for the Saxon "fyrd," or *levée en masse*, were only bound by law to serve for a certain time (probably forty days), and it was indispensable to provide for the safety of the towns, almost everywhere threatened, and to leave men sufficient for the cultivation of the country. Alfred overcame this difficulty by dividing his army, or militia, into two bodies; of these he called one to the field, while the men composing the other were left at home. After a reasonable length of service those in the field returned to their homes, and those left at home took their places in the field. The spectacle of Alfred's large and permanent army, to which they had been wholly unaccustomed, struck Hasting and his confederates with astonishment and dismay. Nor did the position the English king took up with it give them much ground for comfort. Advancing into Kent, he threw himself between Hasting and the other division of the Danes. He thus kept asunder the two armies of the Northmen, and so active were the patrols and troops he threw out in small bodies, and so good the spirit of the villagers and townfolk, cheered by the presence and wise dispositions of the sovereign, that in a short time not a single foraging party could issue from the Danish camp without almost certain destruction. Worn out in body and spirit, the Northmen resolved

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to break up from their camps, and, to deceive the king as to their intentions, they sent submissive messages and hostages, and promised to leave the kingdom. Hasting took to his shipping, and actually made sail, as if to leave the well-defended island; but while the eyes of the Saxons were fixed on his departure, the other division, in Alfred's rear, rushed suddenly from their intrenchments into the interior of the country, in order to seek a ford across the Thames, by which they hoped to be enabled to get into Essex, where the rebel Danes that had been ruled by Guthrum would give them a friendly reception, and where they knew they should meet Hasting and his division, who, instead of putting to sea, merely crossed the Thames, and took up a strong position at Benfleet, on the Essex coast. Alfred had not ships to pursue those who moved by water; but those who marched by land he followed up closely, and brought them to action on the right bank of the Thames, near Farnham, in Surrey. The Danes were thoroughly defeated. Those who escaped the sword and drowning marched along the left bank of the Thames, through Middlesex, into Essex; but being hotly pursued by Alfred, they were driven right through Essex, and across the river Colne, when they found a strong place of refuge in the Isle of Mersea. Here, however, they were closely blockaded, and soon obliged to sue for peace, promising hostages, as usual, and an immediate departure from England. Alfred would have had this enemy in his hand through sheer starvation, but the genius of Hasting, and the defection of the Northmen of the Danelagh, called him to a distant part of the island. Two fleets, one of one hundred sail, the second of forty, and both in good part manned by the Danes who had been so long, and for the last fifteen years so peacefully, settled in England, set sail to attack in two points, and make a formidable diversion. The first of these, which had probably been equipped in Norfolk and Suffolk, doubled the North Foreland, ran down the southern coast as far as Devonshire, and laid siege to Exeter: the smaller fleet, which had been fitted out in Northumbria, and probably sailed from the mouth of the Tyne, took the passage round Scotland, ran down all the western coast, from Cape Wrath to the Bristol Channel, and, ascending that arm of the sea, beleaguered a fortified town to the north of the Severn.

THE CAMPAIGNS IN THE WEST

Though Alfred had established friendly relations with the people of the west of England, who seem on many occasions to have served him with as much ardour as his Saxon subjects, he still felt that Devonshire was a vulnerable part. Leaving, therefore, a portion of his army on the confines of Essex, he mounted all the rest on horses, and flew to Exeter. Victory followed him to the west; he obliged the Danes to raise the siege of Exeter; he beat them back to their ships with great loss, and soon after the minor expedition was driven from the Severn. The blockade of the Danes in the Isle of Mersea does not appear to have been well conducted during his absence, and yet that interval was not devoid of great successes: for, in the mean time, Æthelred, ealdorman of the Mercians and Alfred's son-in-law, with the citizens of London and others, went down to the fortified post at Benfleet, in Essex, laid siege to it, broke into it, and despoiled it of great quantities of gold, silver, horses, and garments; taking away captive also the wife of Hasting and his two sons, who were brought to London, and presented to the king on his return. Some of his followers urged him to put these captives to death—others to detain them in prison as a check upon Hasting; but Alfred, with a generosity

which was never properly appreciated by the savage Dane, caused them immediately to be restored to his enemy, and sent many presents of value with them. By this time the untiring Hasting had thrown up another formidable intrenchment at South Shoebury, in Essex, where he was soon joined by fresh adventurers from beyond the sea. Thus reinforced, he sailed boldly up the Thames. From the Thames, Hasting marched to the Severn, and fortified himself at Buttington. But here he was surrounded by the Saxons and the men of North Wales, who now cordially acted with them; and in brief time Alfred, with Æthelred and two other ealdormen, cut off all his supplies, and blockaded him in his camp. After some weeks, when the Danes had eaten up nearly all their horses, and famine was staring them in the face, Hasting rushed from his intrenchments. Avoiding the Welsh forces, he concentrated his attack upon the Saxons, who formed the blockade to the east of his position. The conflict was terrific; several hundreds (some of the chroniclers say thousands) of the Danes were slain in their attempt to break through Alfred's lines; many were thrown into the Severn and drowned; but the rest, headed by Hasting, effected their escape, and, marching across the island, reached their intrenchment and their ships on the Essex coast. Alfred lost many of his nobles, and must have been otherwise much crippled, for he did not molest Hasting, who could have had hardly any horse in any part of his retreat. Most of the Saxons who fought at Buttington were raw levies, and hastily got together.

THE CAPTURE OF HASTING'S FLEET

When Hasting next showed front it was in the neighbourhood of North Wales, between the rivers Dee and Mersey. During the winter that followed his disasters on the Severn, he had been reinforced by the men of the Danelagh, and at early spring he set forth with his usual rapidity, and marched through the midland counties. Alfred was not far behind him, but could not overtake him until he had seized Chester, which was then almost uninhabited, and secured himself there. This town had been very strongly fortified by the Romans, and many of the works of those conquerors still remaining, no doubt gave strength to Hasting's position, which was deemed too formidable for attack. But the Saxon troops pressed him on the land side, and a squadron of Alfred's ships, which had put to sea, ascended the Mersey and prevented his receiving succour in that direction. Dreading that Chester might become a second Buttington, the Danes burst away into North Wales. After ravaging part of that country, they would have gone off in the direction of the Severn and the Avon, but they were met and turned by a formidable royal army, upon which they retraced their steps, and finally marched off to the northeast. They traversed Northumbria, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk—nearly the whole length of the Danelagh—where they were among friends and allies, and by that circuitous route at length regained their fortified post at South Shoebury, in Essex, where they wintered and recruited their strength as usual.

Early next spring the persevering Hasting sailed to the mouth of the Lea, ascended that river with his ships, and at or near Ware, about twenty miles above London, erected a new fortress on the Lea. On the approach of summer, the burgesses of London, with many of their neighbours, attacked the stronghold on the Lea, but were repulsed with great loss. As London was now more closely pressed than ever, Alfred found it necessary to encamp his army round about the city until the citizens got in their harvest. He then pushed

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a strong reconnoissance to the Lea, which (far deeper and broader than now) was covered by their ships, and afterwards surveyed, at great personal risk, the new fortified camp of the Danes. His active, ingenious mind forthwith conceived a plan, which he had confidently hoped would end in their inevitable destruction. Bringing up his army, he raised two fortresses, one on either side of the Lea, somewhat below the Danish station, and then he dug three deep channels from the Lea to the Thames, in order to lower the level of the tributary stream. So much water was thus drawn off that "where a ship," says an old writer, "might sail in time afore passed, then a little boat might scarcely row;" and the whole fleet of Hasting was left aground, and rendered useless. But yet again did that remarkable chieftain break through the toils spread for him, to renew the war in a distant part of the island. Abandoning the ships where they were, and putting, as they had been accustomed to do, their wives, their children, and their booty under the protection of their friends in the Danelagh, the followers of Hasting broke from their intrenchments by night, and hardly rested till they had traversed the whole of that wide tract of country which separates the Lea from the Severn. Marching for some distance along the left bank of the Severn, they took post close on the river at Quatbridge, supposed to be Quatford, in Shropshire. When Alfred came up with them there, he found them already strongly fortified. Alfred was compelled to respect the intrenchments at Quatbridge, and to leave the Danes there undisturbed during the winter. In the mean time the citizens of London seized Hasting's fleet, grounded in the Lea. Some ships they burned and destroyed, but others they were enabled to get afloat and conduct to London, where they were received with exceeding great joy.

For full three years this Scandinavian Hannibal had maintained a war in the country of the enemy; but now, watched on every side, worn out by constant losses, and probably in good part forsaken as an unlucky leader, both by his brethren settled in the Danelagh and by those on the Continent, his spirit began to break, and he prepared to take a reluctant and indignant farewell of England. In the following spring of 897, by which time dissensions had broken out among their leaders, the Danes tumultuously abandoned their camp at Quatbridge, and utterly disbanded their army soon after, fleeing in small and separate parties in various directions. Some sought shelter among their brethren of the Danelagh, either in Northumbria or Norfolk and Suffolk; some built vessels, and sailed for the Schelde and the mouth of the Rhine; while others, adhering to Hasting in his evil fortune, waited until he was ready to pass into France. A small fleet, bearing his drooping raven, was hastily equipped on our eastern coast, and the humbled chieftain, according to Asser, crossed the Channel "*sine lucro et sine honore*," without profit or honour. It appears that he ascended the Seine, and soon after obtained a settlement on the banks of that river (probably in Normandy) from the weak king of the French.

ALFRED'S NAVY

A few desultory attacks made by sea, and by the men of the Danelagh, almost immediately after Hasting's departure, only tended to show the naval superiority Alfred was attaining, and to improve the Anglo-Saxons in maritime tactics. A squadron of Northumbrian pirates cruised off the southern coasts, with their old objects in view. It was met and defeated on several occasions by the improved ships of the king. Alfred, who had some mechanical

skill himself, had caused vessels to be built, far exceeding those of his enemies in length of keel, height of board, swiftness, and steadiness; some of these carried sixty oars or sweepers, to be used, as in the Roman galleys, when the wind failed; and others carried even more than sixty. They differed in the form of the hull, and probably in their rigging, from the other vessels used in the North Sea. Hitherto the Danish and Friesland builds seem to have been considered as the best models; but these ships, which were found peculiarly well adapted to the service for which he intended them, were constructed after the plan of Alfred's own invention. At the end of his reign they considerably exceeded the number of one hundred sail; they were divided into squadrons, and stationed at different ports round the island, while some of them were kept constantly cruising between England and the main. Although he abandoned their system of ship-building, Alfred retained many Frieslanders in his service, for they were more expert seamen than his subjects, who still required instruction. After an obstinate engagement near the Isle of Wight, two Danish ships, which had been much injured in the fight, were cast ashore and taken. When the crews were carried to the king at Winchester, he ordered them all to be hanged. This severity, so much at variance with Alfred's usual humanity, has caused some regret and confusion to historians. The real rule of Alfred's conduct seems to have been this—to distinguish between such Danes as attacked him from abroad, and such Danes as attacked him from the Danelagh at home. On the services and gratitude of the former he had no claim, but the men of Northumbria, Norfolk, and Sussex had, through their chiefs and princes, sworn allegiance to him, had received benefits from him, and stood bound to the protection of his states, which they were ravaging. From the situation they occupied they could constantly trouble his tranquillity, and in regard to them he may have been led to consider, after the experience he had had of their bad faith, that measures of extreme severity were allowable and indispensable. The two ships captured at the Isle of Wight came from Northumbria, and the twenty ships taken during the three remaining years of his life, and of which the crews were slain or hanged on the gallows, came from the same country, and the other English lands included in the Danelagh.[c]

Alfred's fleet preserved Wessex itself from anything more than a few plundering raids and soon even these ceased. At the same time the Danes of the Danelagh were compelled to observe the Peace of Chippenham, and during the last years of Alfred's life his kingdom enjoyed peace on sea and land. He died in 901.

THE PERSONALITY OF KING ALFRED

The glowing tribute of a modern English statesman to an early English king was pronounced by Lord Rosebery at Winchester during the celebration of the Alfred Millenary in September, 1901.[a]

Around King Alfred there has grown up a halo of tradition such as would dim a lesser man, though his personality stands out pure and distinct amid the legends. And yet for our purpose even the tradition is perhaps sufficient. The Alfred we reverence may well be an idealised figure, for our real knowledge of him is scanty and vague. We have, however, draped round his form, not without reason, all the highest attributes of manhood and kingship. The Arthur of our poets, the paladin king, without fear, without stain, and without reproach, is to us the true representation of Alfred. In him, indeed, we venerate not so much a striking actor in our history as the ideal Englishman,

the perfect sovereign, the pioneer of England's greatness. With his name we associate our metropolis, our fleet, our literature, our laws, our first foreign relations, our first efforts at education. He is, in a word, the embodiment of our civilisation; and yet so narrow was his stage, so limited his opportunities, that he would have marvelled not less than the son of Jesse or the son of Kish at the primacy to which he has been called and at the secular reverence which embalms his memory. Even at his best he ruled over but a province. He made no great conquests, he wrote no great books, he knew none of the splendours of wealth and dominion, there was nothing in him of the Alexander or the Cæsar, he had none of the glories of Solomon, save wisdom alone.

What, indeed, is the secret of his fame, of his hold on the imagination of mankind? It is in the first place a question of personality. He has stamped his character on the cold annals of humanity. How is that done? We cannot tell. We know only that two homely tales of his life—the story of his mother's book and that of the neatherd's hut—have become part of our folk-lore. His life, too—for at one time he is hunted with the deer, as desolate as a defeated pretender, and at another he is the predominant prince in his country and one of the rare sovereigns recognised in the darkness of Europe—his life has those romantic elements which fascinate successive generations. But when all is said and done we cannot wholly explain it. The magnetism of history is an unexplored secret of nature. From another point of view we behold in his career the highest and best type of the qualities which we cherish in our national character. Note first his absorbed devotion to duty. "This will I say," he writes, "that I have sought to live worthily while I lived, and after my life to leave to the men who come after me a remembrance in good works"; and he gave himself, we are told, wholly, unreservedly, to his royal responsibilities and the charge of his people. Then he was the first Englishman of whom it is recorded that he never knew when he was beaten. Sometimes the Danes crushed him, sometimes he crushed the Danes; but he won in the end. Nor was it only with these that he had to contend. In the best twenty years of the half century that was his life he struggled against agonising disease, and the paralysing apprehension of its recurrence. That he should have done so much is wonderful; that he should have done so much under this disability is amazing. Then he had the supreme quality of truth, frankness, candour, an open heart. His word was his bond. That is a quality which was then rare among princes, and is never too common; but it is one which Englishmen love. He was known as the Truth-teller. It is a noble title, more distinguished than the vapid and prostituted epithet of Great. In history he stands as Alfred the Truth-teller. Then he was a man, a complete man. What strikes one most in him, indeed, is his completeness. Complete is, I think, his distinctive epithet. Though profoundly pious, he was no anchorite. Though a king, not a pompous and mysterious phantom. Though a passionate seeker after knowledge, not a pedant or a prig. He lived as a man among men, for he was "all things to all men" in the best sense of the word; rejoicing in the society of his scholars, his priests, his huntsmen, his craftsmen, his farmers; interested in all worthy interests, mixing freely with his subjects, working and playing among them, but with a little scroll of high thoughts always in his bosom. A man among men, dealing all day with the common affairs of life, but with the high ideal burning at his heart.

Then he was a king, a true king, the guide, the leader, the father of his people. He did for them all that in their barbarous condition they required, and in so working a limited work for them he wrought an immortal work for us. He was the captain of all their enterprise, their industrial foreman, their

schoolmaster, their lay bishop, their general, their admiral, their legislator. On a small scale and therefore less, but without distorting vices and therefore greater, he was to his English kingdom what Peter was to Russia. And in working for his people, raising them, strengthening them, enlarging their horizons, he builded better than he knew. His rude councillors were the ancestors of our parliament, his flotilla of galleys was the foundation of our fleet; he first won an English victory at sea. He formed his casual levies into a powerful militia, if not an army. He breathed the earliest inspiration of education into England, an inspiration vital then, which would be scarcely less precious now. And he, with an eye for commerce and defence, gave us London, not as the first or the second founder, but as founder of the London which we know. It is indeed less for what he did, great as were his achievements in relation to his opportunities, than for what he engendered that we honour his name.[n]

Interesting also is the clear and judicious characterisation of the great Anglo-Saxon king from the pen of his biographer, the eminent German historical scholar, Reinhold Pauli.[a]

Pauli's Characterisation of Alfred

The qualities of his mind were those of a statesman and a hero, but elevated, and, at the same time, softened, by his ardent longing for higher and more imperishable things than those on which all the splendour and power of this world generally rest. The most unshakable courage was most certainly the first component of his being; he showed it, while still a youth, in the tumult of the battle of Ascesdune. There was one period when his courage seemed about to desert him. This was when the young king imagined that he saw his country forever in the hands of the foe, and his people doomed to never-ending despair; but from the ordeal of Athelney he came out proved and victorious, and a large number of brave men rivalled each other in imitating his example.

We have already had occasion several times, in the course of this work, to notice another peculiarity of Alfred's mind that was attended with no less gratifying results; he possessed a decided turn for invention, which enabled him not only to extricate himself from personal difficulties, but to suggest new and original ideas in the execution of all sorts of artistic productions and handiwork. The pillars on which the church at Athelney was built, the long ships he constructed, the manner in which he turned a river from its natural course, and his clock of tapers, afford us as convincing evidence of his powers of thought as the battles which he gained.

Elevated by his piety above all his subjects and contemporaries, no one could be farther than he was from becoming a weak bigot, willingly bending beneath the yoke of an arrogant priesthood; and, while immersed in the fulfilment of his religious duties, forgetting the prosperity of worldly affairs, as well as that of his subjects. He was well aware that the country had suffered from the too yielding disposition of his father to the will of the higher ecclesiastics. It is impossible to draw a parallel between Alfred and his descendant, Edward the Confessor. The latter lost his kingdom, and was made a saint; the former kept it by the aid of his sword and a firm reliance on the Almighty. The church of Rome, it is true, did not thank him for this; but he lived, through his works, in the hearts of his people, who celebrated his praises in their songs.[m]

EADWARD THE ELDER

The succession of Eadward was opposed by his cousin Æthelwold, who claimed the crown as the representative of Æthelred, the elder brother of the late monarch. His pretensions were overruled by the decision of the witenagemot; and the discontented prince, apparently under pretence of recovering the hereditary patrimony of his father, assembled his retainers, and occupied the castles of Christchurch and Wimborne. In the latter place he forcibly married a nun out of the convent, and announced his resolution never to surrender the fortress but with his life. The approach of Eadward to Badberry suggested a less hazardous policy. He retired in secrecy, and reached the northern Danes, who pitying his misfortunes, or admiring his spirit, gave him the title of king, and hastened to fight under his banner. In a short time the exile saw himself at the head of an army of adventurers from Northumbria, East Anglia, and France (904). With these he landed in Essex, and obtained possession of that county. The next year he marched through Mercia, crossed the Thames at Cricklade, and pillaged the greater part of Wiltshire. But at the approach of Eadward he retired; and the West Saxons in their turn retaliated on the Danes the injuries which they had inflicted on Mercia and Wessex. From St. Edmund's dyke, in Cambridgeshire, they spread the flames of war to the mouth of the Ouse; and crossing that river, continued in the fenny country the work of devastation. At last Eadward thought proper to withdraw his army.[e]

His Kentish troops which formed his rearguard were surprised and attacked by Æthelwold and the Danes. But although severely defeated, their loss was compensated by the death of Eohric, king of East Anglia, and the ætheling Æthelwold, who fell in the attack.[a]

From this period the king's attention was principally directed to two great objects, the union of Mercia with his own dominions, and the subjugation of the Northumbrian and East Anglian Danes. For a few years the government of Mercia, during the frequent infirmities of Æthelred, was intrusted to the hands of Æthelflæd, a princess whose masculine virtues and martial exploits are celebrated in the highest strains of panegyric by our ancient historians. At the death of her husband, Eadward seized and united to Wessex the two important cities of London and Oxford; nor does Æthelflæd appear to have resented this partition of her territory. She continued to govern the remainder with the title of the Lady of Mercia, and cordially supported her brother in all his operations against the common enemy. But that respect which Eadward had paid to the merit of his sister, he refused to the weakness of his niece Ælfwyn. When Æthelflæd died in 920, he pretended that the young princess had promised marriage to Regnald the Dane, and entering Mercia at the head of his army, sent her an honourable captive into Wessex, abolished every trace of a separate government, and moulded the whole of the Saxon territories into one undivided kingdom.

Had the Danes in England been united under the same monarch, they would probably have been more than a match for the whole power of Eadward; but they still preserved the manners and spirit of their ancestors, and diminished their national strength by dividing it among a number of equal and independent chieftains. After the death of Æthelwold five years elapsed without any important act of hostility; in 910 Eadward conducted his forces into Northumbria, and spent five weeks in ravaging the country and collecting slaves and plunder. The next year the Northmen returned the visit. They

penetrated to the Avon, and thence into Gloucestershire; but in their retreat were overtaken by the Saxons, and suffered a defeat, which was long a favourite subject among the national poets. Eadward now adopted the plan, which had been so successfully pursued by his father, of building fortresses for the defence of his dominions and the annoyance of the enemy. A line drawn from the mouth of the Thames, through Bedfordshire, to Chester, will pretty accurately describe the boundary which separated the hostile nations. To curb the East Anglians, the king built Witham and Hertford; while Æthelflæd, at his suggestion, erected similar fortresses at Bridgenorth, Tamworth, Stafford, Warwick, and other places in the vicinity. Their utility was soon demonstrated in the failure of a Danish expedition from the coast of Brittany. After ravaging the shores of Wales, the barbarians attempted to penetrate into Herefordshire. They were opposed by the inhabitants of the neighbouring burghs, driven into a wood, and compelled to give hostages as a security for their peaceable departure. Eadward was, however, suspicious of their honour, and lined the northern coast of Somersetshire with troops. As he expected, they made two attempts to land in the night at Watchet and at Porlock, and were defeated at both places with considerable slaughter. The survivors fled to one of the uninhabited isles in the mouth of the Severn, but want compelled them to abandon their asylum, and seek new adventures in Wales and Ireland.

The royal brother and sister, having thus provided for the security of their own territories, proceeded to attack those of their enemies. Æthelflæd took Derby by storm, though the Danes obstinately defended themselves in the streets; and then laid siege to Leicester, which, with the adjacent territory, was subdued by her arms. Eadward, on his side, built two forts at Buckingham to overawe the Northmen of the adjoining counties (919), took Bedford by capitulation, and, advancing into Northamptonshire, fortified Towcester. The Danes, alarmed at the progressive encroachments of the Saxons, made in the same year four attempts to obtain possession of the nearest fortresses. One party occupied Tempsford, and besieged Bedford; another stormed the walls of Towcester; a third attacked Wigmore, and a fourth surrounded Malden. In each instance the garrisons defended themselves till the royal army came to their assistance; and Eadward, eager to improve his success, took possession of Huntingdon and Colchester. The Danes were dispirited by so many losses; and all their chieftains from the Welland, in Northamptonshire, to the mouth of the Thames, submitted to the conqueror, took the oaths of allegiance, and acknowledged him for their "lord and protector."

During the next three years the king with unceasing industry pursued the same line of policy. He successively carried his arms to every part of the ancient boundary of Mercia; erected fortresses at Manchester, at Thelwall, on the left bank of the Mersey, at Nottingham, and at Stamford; and by the severity with which he punished every outbreak, tamed into submission the several bands of barbarians who had settled in the island. By these conquests Eadward acquired more real power than had ever been possessed by his predecessors. All the tribes from Northumbria to the Channel formed but one kingdom subject to his immediate control; while the other nations in the island, warned by the fate of their neighbours, anxiously solicited his friendship. The Danes and Angles of the north made him offers of submission; the kings of the Scots and Strathclyde Britons chose him for their "lord and father"; and the princes of Wales paid him a yearly tribute. Yet he was not long permitted to enjoy this preeminence. He died in 925, and his death was immediately followed by that of his eldest son, Ælfward, at Oxford.

[911-925 A.D.]

Eadward had been thrice married, and left a numerous family. Of the sons who survived him, three successively ascended the throne, Æthelstan, Eadmund, and Eadred. Six of his daughters were married to foreign princes, some of them the most powerful sovereigns in Europe; and three embraced a religious life.

In legislative and literary merit Eadward was much inferior to his father: he surpassed him in the magnitude and the durability of his conquests. The subjection of the Danes to Alfred was only nominal; and at his death the kingdom, which he left to his son, was bounded by the Mercian counties on the banks of the Thames and the Severn. Eadward, by steadily pursuing the same object, and insuring the submission of each district before he proceeded to further conquests, extended his rule all over the Danes of Mercia and East Anglia. Wherever he penetrated, he selected a strong position, and while a multitude of workmen surrounded it with a wall of stone, encamped in the neighbourhood for their protection. That these fortifications were equal to their object is evident from the fact that not one of them was ever captured by the enemy; and they were productive, in after ages, of consequences which this monarch could not possibly have foreseen. They were long the principal towns in England, and served to multiply a class of men of a higher order and distinguished by greater privileges than the ceorls or husbandmen. To the burghers was intrusted the defence of their walls and of the adjacent country. By living in society, and having arms in their hands, they grew into consideration, and insensibly acquired such a degree of power and wealth as ultimately to open to their representatives the national council, and thus lay the foundation of that influence which the people enjoy in our present constitution.

ÆTHELSTAN

By the will of the late monarch the crown was left to Æthelstan, his eldest son, about thirty years of age. The claim of the new king was immediately admitted by the thanes of Mercia (925), and after a short time by those of Wessex. The ceremony of his coronation was performed at Kingston by Æthelm, archbishop of Canterbury.

Of the mother of Æthelstan, Malmesbury[h] has told a romantic tale, on the faith of an ancient ballad. She was the daughter of a neatherd, and called Egwina. Her superior beauty, even in her childhood, had attracted admiration: and a dream was said to portend that she would prove the mother of a powerful monarch. This report excited the curiosity of the lady who had nursed the children of Alfred. She took Egwina to her house, and educated her as one of her own family. When the ætheling Eadward casually visited his former nurse, he saw the daughter of the neatherd, and was captivated with her beauty. Æthelstan was the fruit of their mutual affection. From this very doubtful story it has been inferred that the king was an illegitimate son: but the force of the inference is weakened by the testimony of a contemporary poetess, who in mentioning the birth of Æthelstan, alludes to the inferior descent of his mother, but at the same time calls her the partner of Eadward's throne. The child was the delight of his grandfather Alfred, who created him a knight by investing him with a mantle of purple, and a short sword in a golden scabbard. After the death of his mother he was intrusted to the care of his aunt Æthelflæd, a fortunate circumstance, as it probably caused his interests to be, at this period, so eagerly espoused by the natives of Mercia.

In Wessex Æthelstan had to guard against the secret designs of his enemies, of whom the most dangerous was the ætheling Ælfred. The associates of this prince had conspired to seize the person of the king at Winchester, and to deprive him of his sight. On the discovery of the plot Ælfred demanded, according to the forms of the Saxon jurisprudence, to clear himself by oath; and Æthelstan, who dared not refuse the privilege, sent him to Rome in the custody of his messengers, to perform the ceremony in the presence of the pontiff. The unfortunate ætheling swore to his innocence on the altar of St. Peter. But as he survived his oath only three days, his death was considered a sufficient proof of his guilt by the witan, who adjudged his estates to the king.

ÆTHELSTAN
(895-940)

Sihtric, the Danish king of Northumbria, had braved the power of Eadward: he solicited the friendship of Æthelstan, and with it his sister in marriage. The two princes met at Tamworth. Sihtric was baptised, received the hand of Æthelstan's sister, and accepted from Æthelstan a grant of what he already possessed, the country between the Tees and the Firth of Forth. It is said that the barbarian soon repented of his choice, and abandoned both his wife and religion: it is certain that he died at the end of twelve months, and that Æthelstan seized the opportunity to annex Northumbria to his own dominions. The two sons of Sihtric fled before the superior power of the Anglo-Saxon; Godfrith into Scotland, and Olaf [Anlaf] into Ireland. Olaf had the good fortune to meet with friends and associates: but Constantine, the king of the Scots, dared not afford an asylum to the enemy of Æthelstan; and Godfrith, after a fruitless attempt to surprise the city of York, voluntarily surrendered himself to the mercy of the conqueror. He was received with humanity and treated with honour: but the mind of the Dane could not brook the idea of dependence, and on the fourth day he fled to the coast, and commenced the profession of a sea-king.

The ambition of Æthelstan now grasped at the sovereignty of the whole island. In the north he levelled with the ground the castle of York, the principal bulwark of the Danish power; Ealdred, the son of Ealdulf, a Saxon chieftain, was compelled to yield to him the strong castle of Bamborough; and the king of Scots and the prince of Cumberland obeyed his summons and acknowledged his superiority. On the west he intimidated the Britons of Wales and Cornwall. The chieftains of the former waited on him at Hereford, where they stipulated to confine their countrymen to the right bank of the Wye, and to pay a yearly tribute of twenty pounds of gold, three hundred pounds of silver, and five thousand head of cattle. The Cornish Britons had hitherto reached from the Land's End to the river Exe, and possessed one-half of Exeter. He commanded them to retire beyond the Tamar, and surrounded the city with a strong wall of stone. To confirm his claim of sovereignty, he convened at a place called Eadmote all the princes of the Scots, Cambrians, and Britons, who, placing their hands between his, swore to him that fealty which the Saxon vassal was accustomed to swear to his lord.

[934-937 A.D.]

During this tide of success, and when Æthelstan had just reached the zenith of his power, Eadwine, the eldest of his brothers, perished at sea. The traditionary ballads, consulted by Malmesbury, attribute his death to the jealousy of the king, who, convinced of his own illegitimacy, suspected Eadwine of aspiring to that crown which belonged to him by the right of inheritance. It was in vain that the young prince asserted his innocence upon oath; and when his oath was disregarded, threw himself on the affection of his brother. The tyrant thought his own safety incompatible with the life of Eadwine; and, while he affected lenity by commuting the sentence of death into that of banishment, committed his victim to the mercy of the waves in an open and shattered boat, with only one companion. The prince, in despair, leaped into the sea; his attendant coolly waited for the flow of the tide, and was wafted back to the shore in the neighbourhood of Dover. Such is the tale which Malmesbury[h] has preserved, but of which he does not presume to affirm or deny the truth. It seems not to deserve credit. No trace of it is to be discovered in the contemporary biographer of Æthelstan, and in the poem from which it was extracted it was coupled with another tale evidently fabulous. That Eadwine perished at sea, cannot be doubted; but the king appears rather to have deplored his death as a calamity than to have regretted it as a crime. The account of Huntingdon[z] contains all that can now be known of the transaction: "Soon afterwards he had the misfortune to lose in the waves of the ocean his brother Eadwine, a youth of great vigour and good disposition." [1]

Constantine, the king of Scots, eagerly sought to free himself from his dependence on the English monarch; and with this view entered into alliance with Howel, king of Wales. But the power of Æthelstan was irresistible. At the head of his army he extended his ravages as far as Dunfœdor and Wertermore, while his fleet pillaged the coast to the extremity of Caithness. Constantine was compelled to implore the clemency of the conqueror, and to surrender his son as a hostage for his fidelity.

Three years afterwards the superiority of the English king was threatened by a more formidable confederacy. In 937 a fleet of six hundred and fifteen sail cast anchor in the Humber. It obeyed the commands of Olaf, who was come with an army of Irish and northern adventurers to reconquer the dominions of his father. His arrival was the signal of war to his confederates, the Scots and Britons, who under their respective princes directed their march to the same spot. Negotiations were opened to gain time for the arrival of Æthelstan, who, not content with his own forces, had purchased the aid of several sea-kings. The armies were soon in the neighbourhood of each other, when Olaf planned a midnight attack, in the hope of surprising and killing his adversary. To discover the quarters of Æthelstan, he is said to have adopted an artifice familiar to the Northmen. The minstrel was in that age a sacred character: and Olaf with his harp in his hands fearlessly entered the English camp, mixed without suspicion among the troops, and was at last conducted to the royal pavilion. The king, who was at dinner, bade the stranger strike his harp, and rewarded him for his song. But the disguise of the pretended minstrel could not conceal him from the eye of a soldier who had once served under his standard, but who disdained to betray his former leader. As soon as Olaf was out of danger, this man related the circumstance to Æthelstan, and to the charge of perfidy, indignantly replied:

[1 Knight says: "The monkish romancers told a similar story of the wife of Offa; and the same interesting fable will always speak to the heart in the Custance of Chaucer and the Prospero of Shakespeare."]

"No; I have shown that my honour is above temptation; and remember that if I had been perfidious to him, I might also have proved perfidious to you." The king accepted the apology, and by his advice removed to a distant part of the field. The ground which he had left was afterwards occupied by the bishop of Sherborne. In the dead of the night the alarm was given: Olaf with a body of chosen followers was in the midst of the camp, and a bloody and doubtful conflict ensued. In the morning, when he retired, it was discovered that the prelate had perished with all his attendants.[1]

The Battle of Brunanburh (937 A.D.)

Two days after this occurrence was fought the battle of Brunanburh [937], in Northumbria;[2] a battle celebrated in the relics of Saxon and Scandinavian poetry. The confederates consisted of five nations, Norwegians, Danes, Irish, Scots, and Britons; in the English army waved a hundred banners, and round each banner, if we may believe the exaggeration of a contemporary, were ranged a thousand warriors. The contest lasted till sunset. A northern sea-king, in the pay of Æthelstan, was opposed to the Irish, and after an obstinate struggle drove them into a wood at no great distance. Thurcytel with the citizens of London, and Singin with the men of Worcestershire, penetrated into the midst of the Scots, killed the son of their king, and compelled Constantine to save himself by a precipitate flight. Olaf still maintained his position against all the efforts of Æthelstan and his West Saxons; but the victors, returning from the pursuit, fell on his rear, and decided the fortune of battle. The Northman escaped the sword of his enemies; but he left five confederate sea-kings, seven jarls, and many thousands of his followers on the field of battle. "Never," says the native poet, "since the arrival of the Saxons and Angles, those artists of war, was such a carnage known in England."

This splendid victory crushed the enemies, and confirmed the ascendency of Æthelstan. By the Northmen he was distinguished with the appellation of "the conqueror." The British princes no longer disputed his authority; the chieftains of the East Anglian and Northumbrian Danes, who under a nominal vassalage had so often maintained a real independence, entirely disappeared; and all the countries originally conquered and colonised by the different Saxon tribes became united under the same Crown. To Æthelstan belongs the glory of having established what has ever since been called the kingdom of England. His predecessors, till the reign of Alfred, had been styled kings of Wessex. That monarch and his son Eadward assumed the title of kings of the Anglo-Saxons. Æthelstan sometimes called himself king of the English; at other times claimed the more pompous designation of king of all Britain.[e]

The power which Æthelstan had won by his sword gave him European influence, at a time which we are little accustomed to consider as one of international amity. When the Normans expelled the Duke of Brittany from his dominions, Æthelstan welcomed and educated his son Alan; who finally

[1The similarity of this exploit of Olaf with that of Alfred before the battle of Ethandune will at once be suggested. Ramsay[l] disposes of the story without mentioning it. He says: "Bishop Werstan of Sherborne was said to have fallen a victim to his own imprudence in pitching his camp before the action on a spot condemned by the king as too much exposed to attack."]

[2The site of Brunanburh is doubtful. Skene,[v] in his *Celtic Scotland*, places it at Aldborough. Ramsay,[l] to whom we are indebted for solving many problems of locality, is satisfied that the battle was fought at Bourne (anciently Brunne) in Lincolnshire.]

drove out the Normans with the Saxon's aid. Hakon, the son of the king of Norway, was also welcomed and educated in England, and was assisted by Æthelstan in obtaining his throne. Louis IV of France, in his earlier years, had sought refuge with his maternal uncle, Æthelstan, and hence he was called *D'outre Mer*, "from beyond the sea," during the usurpation of Rudolf. Summoned to the throne from his English exile, he was finally protected in his dominion by the English king. The states of France sent deputies to Æthelstan, on the death of Rudolf, who took the oath of allegiance to Louis in the presence of Æthelstan and his queen; and when the rule of the young Frank was disturbed by his great vassals, another treaty of alliance between the countries was entered into. Daniel, the French historian, has this comment on the event: "This is the first example which we have in our history, not only of an offensive league between France and England, but it is also the first treaty by which these two kingdoms concerned themselves about each other's welfare. Until this event the two nations considered themselves as two worlds, which had no connection but that of commerce to maintain, and had no interest to cultivate either friendship or enmity in other concerns." Æthelstan had a difficult policy to pursue. Hugh, who married Æthelstan's sister, Eadhita (then dead), was one of the great vassals who was opposed to Louis IV; and the German king, Otto, who had married Eadgyth, another sister, had invaded the French dominions. But Æthelstan held firmly to the interests of his nephew. The position of England and France at this period was certainly a memorable one. The continental alliances of Æthelstan, and especially the marriages of his sisters, are indications of a genius for statecraft, such as we scarcely expect in those times. In the personal character of the Saxon we trace "the pride of kings," and the barbaric pomp of self-asserting power. The kings who sought his alliance approached him with presents, such as would propitiate his love of magnificent display. Norway sent him a ship with golden beak, and purple sail, and gilded shields. Hugh, the great duke of the Franks, demanded his sister in marriage, with "presents such as might gratify the most boundless avarice"—perfumes, jewels, diadems, caparisoned horses, the sword of Constantine the Great, and the spear of Charlemagne.[d]

In the year 940, October 27th, Æthelstan died, regretted by his subjects and admired by the surrounding nations. He was of a slender habit and middling stature. His hair, which was yellow, he wore in ringlets entwined with thread of gold. Among the higher orders of the nobility he maintained that reserve which became his superior station; to the lower classes of his subjects he was affable and condescending. From his father he had inherited a considerable treasure; but his liberality was not inferior to his opulence, and the principal use which he made of money was to enrich others. To his vassals he was accustomed to make valuable presents; the spoil collected in his military expeditions was always divided among his followers; and his munificence to the clergy was proved by the churches which he erected or repaired. Neither ought his charities to be left unnoticed. He annually redeemed at his private expense a certain number of convicts, who had forfeited their liberty for their crimes; and his bailiffs were ordered, under severe penalties, to support a pauper of English extraction on every two of his farms. As a legislator he was anxious to suppress offences, to secure an impartial administration of justice, and to preserve the standard coin of the realm in a state of purity. With this view he held assemblies of the witan at Grately, Faversham, Exeter, and Thundersfield: associations were formed under his auspices for the protection of property; and regulations were enacted respect-

ing the apprehension, the trial, and the punishment of malefactors. Negligence in the execution of the laws was severely chastised. A thane paid to the crown a fine of sixty shillings; a superior magistrate was amerced in double that sum, with the forfeiture of his office.[e]

DUNSTAN

At the court of Æthelstan was a precocious youth of a noble race, who had been educated at the monastery of Glastonbury. His acquirements were far above those of his time, and he made pretensions to supernatural communications. His musical skill, and his other various accomplishments, rendered him a favourite, but his boasted visions, and his superior talents and knowledge, caused him to be regarded as a sorcerer. This youth was Dunstan, for thirty years the real governor of England. Driven from the favour of Æthelstan, under the rude belief which denounced arts called mag-

DEERHURST CHURCH, GLOUCESTERSHIRE
(Dating from eighth or ninth century.)

ical as the greatest of crimes, he was forced into another mode of life. The seductions of the court were to be exchanged for the severities of the cloister. The contest was a hard one; Dunstan was passionately in love with a maiden suited to him in rank. His uncle Æthelm was archbishop of Canterbury; and to him the attachment was confided. The stern prelate saw that the great talents of his relative would open a career of ambition to him, by which the Church would be powerfully upheld. The dictates of our common nature were represented as unholy feelings. Threats and blandishments were opposed to the strong will of the young man, who could only see misery in the monastic system. Illness came; and the enfeebled mind was bowed to submission. Then Dunstan renounced the world in the monkish sense of renunciation. But he was bent upon subduing the world far more completely by the cowl than by the spear. In the ardour which some call insanity, and others genius, he spurned the tame privations of the ordinary cell; and by the side of the

[940–942 A.D.]

church of Glastonbury he lived in a wretched hut, or cave, in which he could not stand upright. As his groans under the self-inflicted scourge broke the midnight silence, the rumour went forth that he was struggling with the evil one. The saintly monk soon had votaries. A noble lady poured her fortune into his lap. Crowds came to gaze upon him when he emerged from his den to do the service of the altar. His harp sometimes sounded in the intervals of his prayers and penances; and the tap of his hammer at his forge showed that he was engaged in some smith's work of utility or ornament. Out of that miserable hut came the sagacious ruler of two kings, and the tyrannous oppressor of a third. Under Eadmund, Dunstan was simple abbot of Glastonbury. It was a proud step over the heads of his brethren, who held their easy way, untempted by any fiend, and not at all covetous of saintly honours through bodily mortifications. But the abbot of Glastonbury, with all his chartered power, "as well in causes known as unknown, in small as in great, and even in those which are above and under the earth, on dry land and on the water, on woods and on plains"; [1] this abbot was a humble man, compared with the greatness to which a boundless ambition might aspire. The narrative of his career is, for some time, the history of England.[d]

EADMUND

Northumbria, after the extinction of its native kings, continued to present scenes of anarchy and bloodshed. Its chieftains were partly of Saxon, partly of Danish origin. Sometimes a fortunate adventurer extended his authority over the whole nation: sometimes two or more shared the sovereign power among them. But they were no better than flitting shadows of royalty, following each other in rapid succession. After a year or two many of them perished by the treachery of their friends or the swords of their enemies; many were compelled to abandon the country, and revert to the pursuits of piracy; hardly one transmitted the inheritance of his authority to his children. Occasionally necessity extorted from them an acknowledgment of the superiority claimed by the kings of Wessex: but the moment the danger was removed, they uniformly forgot their oaths, and resumed the exercise of their independence. It seems to have mattered little whether these princes were natives or foreigners.

After the battle of Brunanburh the terror of Æthelstan had kept this turbulent people under some restraint: but at his death their ancient spirit revived; Olaf was invited to hazard a third time the fortune of war; and within a few weeks the Humber was covered by a numerous fleet of foreign adventurers. The sea-king rested his hope of success on the rapidity of his motions, and, marching into Mercia, obtained possession of Tamworth. Eadmund, the brother of Æthelstan, about eighteen years of age, had been crowned at Kingston, and hastened to oppose the invaders. The operations of the campaign are involved in much obscurity. The success which attended the first efforts of Eadmund seem to have been balanced by a subsequent defeat; and the respective losses of the two princes induced them to listen to the suggestions of the archbishops Odo and Wulfstan, who laboured to effect a pacification. The vanity of the chroniclers has exhibited the transaction in partial colours: but the conditions of the treaty prove the superiority of Olaf. Eadmund ceded in full sovereignty to the Dane all the provinces on the north of the Watling Street.

[1 These words are in the charter to Dunstan, as given in William of Malmesbury.[h]]

The sea-king did not long enjoy his good fortune. He died the next year, and Eadmund improved the opportunity to recover the dominions which he had lost. His measures were planned with foresight, and executed with vigour. The "Five Burghs," as they were called, of Derby, Leicester, Nottingham, Stamford, and Lincoln, had long been inhabited by the descendants of Danes, who, though they made a profession of obedience to the English monarchs, considered it a duty to favour the enterprises of their kinsmen. These towns formed as it were a chain of fortresses running through Mercia and garrisoned by enemies. The king began his operations by reducing them in succession. Their inhabitants were expelled, and replaced by English colonies. Eadmund next proceeded into Northumbria. That country was already divided between two princes, one of whom, like his predecessor, was called Olaf; the other styled himself Reingwald, king of York. They submitted without resistance to the superior power of Eadmund, acknowledged themselves his vassals, and embraced Christianity (943). The king stood sponsor to Olaf at his baptism, and adopted Reingwald for a son when he received confirmation. Yet he had hardly left the country, when they again asserted their independence. Their perfidy soon met with its punishment. The archbishop of York and the ealdorman of Mercia united their forces and drove the two rebels out of the country.

A sense of their own danger had hitherto taught the Britons of Cumbria to assist their neighbours in these struggles to maintain their independence. It was against them that Eadmund next directed his arms (945). Every effort which they could make was hopeless: the two sons of Donald (Domnail), their king, fell into the hands of the conqueror, and were deprived of sight, and the country was bestowed on Malcolm (Mailcolum), king of Scots, on the condition that he should become the vassal of the English crown, and should unite with Eadmund in opposing the attempts of the sea-kings.

The reign of Eadmund lasted only six years. He was celebrating at Pucklechurch in Gloucestershire the feast of St. Augustine, the apostle of the Saxons, when he perceived Leofa, a noted outlaw, enter the hall. This man had been banished on account of his crimes some years before, and now had the audacity to seat himself at the royal table, and to offer resistance when the cup-bearer ordered him to depart. Passion hurried Eadmund to the spot, where he received a wound in the breast from a dagger which Leofa had concealed under his clothes. The king immediately expired: the assassin was cut in pieces by the royal attendants.

Eadmund had been married to Ælfgifu, a princess of exemplary virtue, whose solicitude for the relief of the indigent, and charity in purchasing the liberty of slaves, have been highly extolled by our ancient writers.[1] She bore him two sons, Eadwig and Eadgar, of whom the eldest could not be more than nine years of age. Their childhood rendered them incapable of directing the government; and in an assembly of the prelates, thanes, and vassal princes of Wales, their uncle Eadred, the only surviving son of Eadward, was chosen king; and, to use the inflated language of a charter given on the occasion, was "consecrated at Kingston to the quadripartite government of the Anglo-Saxons, Northumbrians, pagans, and Britons."

[1] Ælfgifu has been sometimes said to have been only the king's mistress, because in a charter she calls herself *concubina regis*. But concubina in the Latin of that age had the same meaning as *conlaterana* and *consors*. Most certainly the king's mistress would not be called upon to sign his charters. By the chroniclers she is styled "the holy queen," and Æthelweard, who could not be ignorant, terms her Eadmund's wife and queen.

[946-955 A.D.]

EADRED

The reign of Eadred was principally distinguished by the final subjugation of Northumbria. Immediately after his coronation,[1] he proceeded to that country, and received first from the natives, afterwards from the Scots, and lastly from the Cumbrians, the usual oaths of fidelity. But the obedience of the Northumbrians lasted only as long as they were overawed by his presence: he was no sooner departed than they expelled his officers and set his authority at defiance. Eric, who had been driven from Norway by his brother Hakon, and had wandered for years a pirate on the ocean, landed on their coast, and was immediately saluted king. The news excited the indignation of Eadred. His first object was to secure the city of York; and with that view he despatched his chancellor Thurcytel to Archbishop Wulfstan, to confirm the wavering fidelity of that prelate and the citizens. The king soon afterwards entered Northumbria at the head of the men of Wessex and Mercia, and by ravaging the lands severely punished the perfidy of the rebels. But as he led back his followers, laden with pillage and unsuspicious of danger, the gates of York were thrown open in the night; a chosen band of adventurers silently followed his march; and a division of his army was surprised and destroyed. To avenge this insult he resumed the work of devastation: but his anger was appeased by presents, entreaties, and submission: and he returned in triumph with a long train of captives to London. Eric might still perhaps have maintained himself in the country, had he not been opposed by a new competitor, Olaf, one of the princes who had fled from the sword of Eadmund in the last reign. The two rivals assembled their forces: Olaf was victorious; and the Norwegian with his son and brother perished in the wilds of Stainmoor by the treachery of Osulf and the sword of Macco, the son of Olaf.

This was the last struggle of Northumbrian independence. Eadred returned with a numerous army, and traversed the country without opposition. Large and fertile districts were laid desolate; the archbishop, whose conduct had greatly irritated the king, was immured for a year within the castle of Jedburgh (Judanbyrig); the principal noblemen were torn from their dependants, and carried by the king into captivity; the whole province, like the rest of England, was divided into shires, ridings, and wapentakes; and the government was intrusted to a number of officers appointed by Eadred under the superintendence of Osulf, who took the title of Earl of Northumberland.

Eadred was afflicted with a lingering and painful disease; and much of the merit of his reign must be attributed to the counsels of his favourite ministers, his chancellor, Thurcytel, and Dunstan, abbot of Glastonbury. Thurcytel was a clergyman of royal descent, the eldest son of Æthelweard, and the grandson of Alfred. He had refused preferment in the Church, but accepted and retained the office of chancellor or secretary to the king, under his cousins, Æthelstan, Eadmund, and Eadred. His abilities were honoured with the approbation of the prince and the applause of the people. He held the first place in the royal councils; the most important offices, both civil and ecclesiastical, were conferred by his advice; and his attendance on the sovereign

[1 Green *k* says: "The crowning of Eadred, indeed, was a fresh step forward toward a national kingship. His election was the first national election, the first election by a witenagemot, where Briton and Dane and Englishmen were alike represented, where Welsh underkings and Danish jarls sat side by side with English nobles and bishops. His coronation was in the same way the first national coronation, the first union of the primate of the north and the primate of the south in setting the crown on the head of one who was to rule from the Forth to the Channel."]

was required in every military expedition. The important part which he acted in the battle of Brunanburh has been already noticed.[e]

[Eadred, who was never married and left no issue, died after a reign of almost ten years, in 955.]

EADWIG THE FAIR,[1] EADGAR, AND EADWARD THE MARTYR

Eadwig (Edwy), called the Fair, succeeded to the crown of his uncle by the voice of the witan. The boy-king, who was sixteen or at most eighteen years of age at his accession, has been stigmatised by the monastic writers as the most weak, profligate, and tyrannous of unwise rulers. Henry of Huntingdon,[z] supported by others who had not the prejudices of the cloister, says: "This king wore the diadem not unworthily; but after a prosperous and becoming commencement of his reign its happy promise was cut short by a premature death." In the destruction of that happy promise, and in that premature death, we have a tragedy over which many eyes have wept. The participation of Dunstan in that tragedy has made his name hateful to all by whom the piteous tale of "Eadwig and Ælfgifu (Elgiva)" has been received with undoubting faith. Disputed as the popular belief has been by polemical writers, the poetical aspect of the story will always supersede the fanatical. The one is natural and consistent; the other is unnatural and disingenuous. Nor is the evidence, taken altogether, insufficient to rebut the calumnies with which the lives of these poor victims of an unscrupulous policy have been overshadowed. We have carefully examined that evidence, and we shall tell the story as we collect it out of many contradictory narratives, most of them defiled by the prurient scandals of those who, in blackening Eadwig and his beloved one, endeavour to justify their oppressors.

EADWIG
From an ancient coin.
(Ca 935–959.)

The coronation of the young king followed quickly after his accession. His witan had taken the oath of allegiance to him, and before the altar he had himself taken the oath to his subjects. The coronation feast succeeds. The king sits at the banquet surrounded by timid friends and suspicious enemies. He has taken the oath that he will hold God's church, and all the Christian people of his realm, in true peace. But at that banquet there are ministers of God's church who bear towards each other the most deadly hostility. "He despised the advice of his counsellors," says Malmesbury.[h] The counsellors that he found in possession of power were Dunstan and his friends, the leaders

[1 "In dealing with this unfortunate reign," writes Ramsay[i], "the historian finds himself confronted not so much by conflicting evidence, as by one-sided evidence obviously tainted by party spirit. The king was involved at the very outset in a quarrel in which the leading clergy were arrayed against him. The chroniclers are practically all on the side of the clergy, and they spare no pains to blacken their adversary."]

of one great party. Eadwig, who is accused with having considered Eadred a usurper, fell into the hands of the leaders of another party. At this coronation feast the king retired early. As was the invariable custom at these Saxon banquets, there was excessive use of wine, and the passions of men were proportionately excited. The assembly murmured, with some reason, at the absence of the king. Dunstan and another went forth; and bursting into Eadwig's private chamber, found him in the company of Ælfgifu and her mother Æthelgifu. The abbot seized the youth and forcibly dragged him back to the hall.[d]

Such an outrage—such a humiliation in the face of his assembled subjects—must have passed Eadwig's endurance. Nor was this all the wrong. While in the chamber, Dunstan addressed Ælfgifu and her mother in the most brutal language, and threatened the latter with infamy and the gallows. The king had a ready rod wherewith to scourge the monk. Dunstan, among other offices, filled that of treasurer to Eadred, the preceding sovereign, and Eadwig, it is said, had all along suspected him of having been guilty of peculation in his charge. If Eadwig had ever whispered these suspicions—and from his youth, imprudence, and hastiness of temper, he had probably done so often—this alone would account for Dunstan's ire. However this may be, the fiery abbot of Glastonbury, who returned from the festival to his abbey, was now questioned touching the moneys; his property was sequestered; his court places were taken from him; the monks who professed celibacy were driven out, and his monastery was given to the secular clergy, who still insisted on having wives like other men; and finally a sentence of banishment was hurled at Dunstan. He fled for the monastery of St. Peter's, in Ghent, but was scarcely three miles from the shore, on his way to Flanders, when messengers reached it, who, it is said, had orders to put out his eyes if they caught him in this country.[c]

Eadwig chose his side, perhaps, indiscreetly. A strong party of the aristocracy, a fanatical and therefore influential party of the clergy, combined against him. In such contests there is little moderation; and Christian charity is trodden under foot by what is called Christian zeal. Eadwig's new counsellors advised strong measures against their opponents; and their opponents revenged themselves by loading the king and his female friends with obloquy, such as Tacitus more justly bestowed upon the frightful profligacy of his time. Eadwig met the scandal as alone it could be met. Ælfgifu became his wife. No monkish abuse can rail away the fact that in a document of undoubted authority—an agreement for the exchange of lands between Bishop Byrhthelm and Abbot Æthelwold—the following entry appears: "And this was by leave of King Eadwig; and these are the witnesses: Ælfgifu, the king's wife, and Æthelgifu, the king's wife's mother." Kemble says, "This, then, was not a thing done in a corner, and the testimony is conclusive that Ælfgifu was Eadwig's queen."[d]

The story of Eadwig and Ælfgifu has never been told twice alike. On it, as Stubbs[r] remarks, an amount of criticism has been spent "altogether out of proportion to the materials of its history." The apologists for Dunstan have accepted with scarcely a question the accounts left by contemporary writers and chroniclers, who were palpably writing to uphold the unscrupulous abbot and the things for which he stood, rather than to give the facts of the case. The characters of both Æthelgifu and her daughter have been dragged in the mire, and the startling declaration that both were mistresses of the boy king has been set forth. The story as here related is now pretty generally accepted, though so modern a writer as the learned Catholic authority

Lingard[e] has accepted the monkish stories, and has been severely criticised for his bias and lack of historical accuracy in so doing.[a]

Before this extreme rupture Eadwig had probably meddled with the then stormy politics of the church, or betrayed an inclination to favour the secular clergy in opposition to the monks; and this again would, and of itself, suffice to account for Dunstan's outrageous behaviour at the coronation feast. After Dunstan's flight the king certainly made himself the protector of the "married clerks"; for, expelling those who professed celibacy, he put the others in possession not only of Glastonbury and Malmesbury, but of several other abbeys. In so doing Eadwig, fatally for himself, espoused the weaker party and still further exasperated Odo, the archbishop of Canterbury, who entertained the same views in state matters and church discipline as his friend Dunstan.

Shortly after the departure of Dunstan, a general rising of the people, instigated by Odo, took place in Northumbria (the reader will bear in mind that the archbishop was a Dane), and a corresponding movement following, under the same influence or holy sanction, in Mercia, it was determined to set one brother in hostile array against the other; and, in brief time, Eadgar was declared independent sovereign of the whole of the island north of the Thames. Dunstan then returned in triumph from his brief exile, which had scarcely lasted a year.[c]

It was while the revolt in the north was rapidly gaining strength that an event took place that more nearly touched the king than the loss of half his kingdom. This was the forcible separation of the king and his young queen. The divorce was secured by Archbishop Odo, on the ground that the pair were too nearly related. The relationship cannot have been very close, but it is not unlikely that it was sufficient to constitute a bar under the extreme interpretation of the day when sponsorship or guardianship brought persons within the prohibited degree. The opposition of the archbishop and his party to the influence supposed to be exerted against them by the queen's mother was more than likely the real cause of the action. The fate alike of Lady Æthelgifu and her daughter, the queen, is shrouded in mystery. In connection with it there has come down to us an almost unbelievable story of cruelty and brutality. Happily, like all our records of this stormy reign, it rests on a not very reliable authority, and even this authority by reason of its ambiguity may be variously interpreted. It is Osbern[t] in his *Life of Odo*, written a century after the events recorded, who tells the horrible story. As it was repeated on his authority by both Eadmer[s] and Malmesbury,[h] and has been told since by other writers, it was as follows: Odo, finding that the king refused to give up his queen, even after the divorce had been decreed, planned to separate them by force. Ælfgifu was seized, her face branded to destroy her beauty, and she was carried off to Ireland. There she fell into good hands, her wounds were healed and her beauty restored, and means were provided for her return to England. At Gloucester, presumably before she had rejoined the king, she was taken either by hirelings of the archbishop or a band of Mercian rebels, and hamstrung and otherwise mutilated, so that she died. In a life of Dunstan, which he also wrote, Osbern[aa] told another story which differs in some important particulars. In the *Life of Odo*[t] he does not mention either Ælfgifu or her mother by name, but it is clear that it is to them he refers. In his *Life of Dunstan*[aa] he hopelessly confuses the two. All we really know is that at this time all traces of both Æthelgifu and Ælfgifu are lost, and we hear of the return to court of Eadgifu, Eadwig's mother, who had long been in disfavour. At any rate Eadwig did not long survive the separa-

[959-975 A.D.]

tion, but died in the following year, whether of grief or a broken heart, or by the hand of an assassin, or poison, it seems impossible to tell.[a]

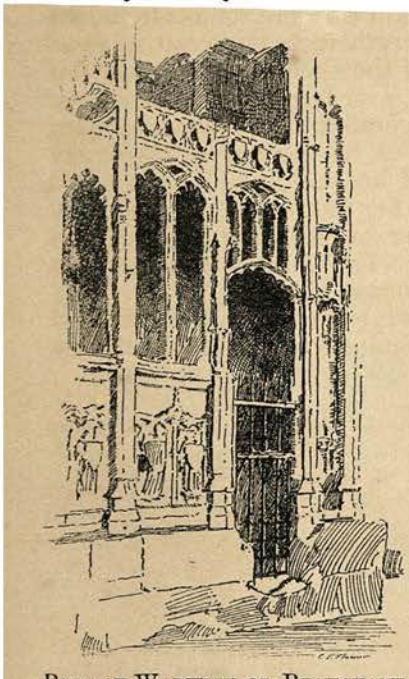
Eadgar (Edgar) his brother, who had been put forward against him in his lifetime, now succeeded to all his dignities. As a boy of fifteen he could exercise little authority: he was long a passive instrument in the hands of Dunstan and his party, who used their power in establishing their cause, in enforcing the celibacy of the clergy, and in driving out, by main force, all such married clergymen as would not separate from their wives. At the same time, it cannot be denied that Dunstan and the monks ruled the kingdom with vigour and success, and consolidated the detached states into more compact integrity and union than had ever been known before. Several causes favoured this process. Among others, Eadgar, who had been brought up among the Danes of East Anglia and Northumbria, was endeared to that people, who, in consequence, allowed him to weaken their states by dividing them into several separate earldoms or governments, and to make other innovations, which they would have resented with arms in their hands under any of his predecessors. His fleet was also wisely increased to the number of 360 sail,[1] and these ships were so well disposed, and powerful squadrons kept so constantly in motion, that the sea-kings were held in check on their own element, and prevented from landing and troubling the country. At the same time, tutored by the indefatigable Dunstan, who soon was made, or rather who soon made himself, archbishop of Canterbury, the king accustomed himself to visit in person every part of his dominions annually. In the land progresses he was attended by the primate, or by energetic ministers of Dunstan's appointing; and as he went from Wessex to Mercia, from Mercia to Northumbria, courts of justice were held in the different counties, audiences and feasts were given, appeals were heard, and the neighbouring princes—his vassals or allies—of Wales, Cumbria, and Scotland, were awed into respect or obedience, and on several occasions seem to have bowed before his throne. When he held his court at Chester, and had one day a wish to visit the monastery of St. John's, on the river Dee, eight crowned kings (so goes the story) plied the oars of his barge, while he guided the helm.[c]

EADGAR
From an ancient coin.
(Ca 944–975.)

Eadmund, after his conquest of Cumbria (945), had given it over to the Scottish king Malcolm, on condition that he acknowledged the sovereignty of the English crown. Dunstan saw the wisdom of a policy that bound to the English king in friendship the only other sovereign on the island whose hostility could prove a real menace to the continued peace of the realm. The policy of Eadmund was followed, therefore, by a cession of Lothian to Kenneth of Scotland, and it was to this cession very likely that Eadgar owed the freedom from wars which has given him the title of "the

[1 Florence of Worcester[w] declares that his fleet consisted of 3,600 sail; the number here given is accepted by Ramsay[l] as more probably correct. The fleet was built and maintained, it appears, by assessments on the counties according to the number of their hundreds.]

Peaceful." Exactly what Kenneth undertook in return for the cession it is impossible to say, but probably no more was required of him than a promise of faithful friendship and a general recognition of the paramountcy of Eadgar's authority in the island. "Eadgar, like Alfred," says Freeman,[i] "knew how to guard his empire, and a fleet which yearly sailed around the whole island, and which often carried the king in person, was a sufficient safeguard of Britain against a foreign foe. And no West-Saxon emperor ever made his supremacy so fully felt by all the races of the island as the one who never drew his sword against a Scottish or Northumbrian enemy."[a]



PART OF WARWICK OR BEAUCHAMP CHANTRY
(Tewkesbury abbey, founded in 715 A.D.)

Eadgar certainly bore prouder and more sounding titles than any of his predecessors. He was styled basileus or emperor of Albion, king of the English and of all the nations and islands around. During his whole reign, his kingdom was not troubled by a single war. He commuted a tribute he received from a part or the whole of Wales into three hundred wolves' heads annually, in order to extirpate those ravenous animals; and, according to William of Malmesbury,[h] this tribute ceased in the fourth year, for want of wolves to kill. The currency had been so diminished in weight by the fraudulent practice of clipping, that the actual value was far inferior to the nominal. He therefore reformed the coinage, and had new coins issued all over the kingdom. Though Eadgar was now in mature manhood, there is pretty good evidence to show that these measures, with others, generally of a beneficial nature, were suggested and carried into effect by Dunstan, who, most indubitably, had his full share in the next operations, which are mentioned with especial laud and triumph by the monkish writers. He made married priests so scarce or so timid that their faces were nowhere to be seen; and he founded or restored no fewer than fifty monasteries, which were all subjected to the rigid rules of the Benedictine order. It is curious that the monks, who had a debt of gratitude to pay, and who, in their summary of his whole character, indeed, uphold Eadgar as a godly, virtuous prince, should have recorded actions which prove him to have been one of the most viciously profligate of the Saxon kings. The court of this promoter of celibacy and chastity swarmed at all times with concubines, some of whom were obtained in the most violent or flagitious manner. During the life of his first wife he carried off from the monastery of Wilton a beautiful young lady of noble birth, named Wulfrith, who was either a professed nun, or receiving her education under the sacred covering of the veil. It has been said that Dunstan here interfered with a courage which absolves him from the charge of reserving his reproofs for those who stood, like the unfortunate Eadwig, in the position of enemies. But what was the amount of his interference in this extreme case, where the sanctity of the cloister itself was violated? He condemned the king to lay aside an empty, inconvenient bauble—not to wear his crown on his head for seven

years—and to a penance of fasting, which was probably in good part performed by deputy.[1] For all that we can learn to the contrary, Eadgar was allowed to retain Wulfrith as his mistress. On another occasion, when the guest of one of his nobles at Andover, he ordered that the fair and honourable daughter of his host should be sent to his bed. The young lady's mother artfully substituted a handsome slave or servant; and this menial was added to his harem, or taken to court, where, according to William of Malmesbury,[h] she enjoyed his exceeding great favour, until he became enamoured of Ælfthryth (Elfrida), his second lawful wife. Romantic as are its incidents, the story of his marriage with the execrable Ælfthryth rests on about as good authority as we can find for any of the events of the time. The fame of this young lady's beauty reached the ears of Eadgar, ever hungry of such reports. To ascertain whether her charms were not exaggerated, the royal voluptuary despatched Æthelwold, his favourite courtier, to the distant castle of her father, Ordgar, earl of Devonshire. Æthelwold became himself enamoured of the beauty, wedded her, and then represented her to the king as being rich, indeed, but not otherwise commendable. Eadgar suspected, or was told, the real truth. He insisted on paying her a visit. The unlucky husband was allowed to precede him, that he might put his house in order; but he failed in his real object, which was to obtain his wife's forgiveness for having stepped between her and a throne, and to induce her to disguise or conceal the brilliancy of her charms by homely attire and rustic demeanour. The visit was made: the king was captivated, as she intended he should be. Soon after Æthelwold was found murdered in a wood, and Eadgar married his widow. This union, begun in crime, led to the foul murder of Eadgar's eldest son: and under Æthelred, the only son he had by Ælfthryth, the glory of the house of Alfred was eclipsed for ever. He himself did not survive the marriage more than six or seven years, when he died, at the early age of thirty-two, and was buried in the abbey of Glastonbury, which he had made magnificent by vast outlays of money and donations of land.[c]

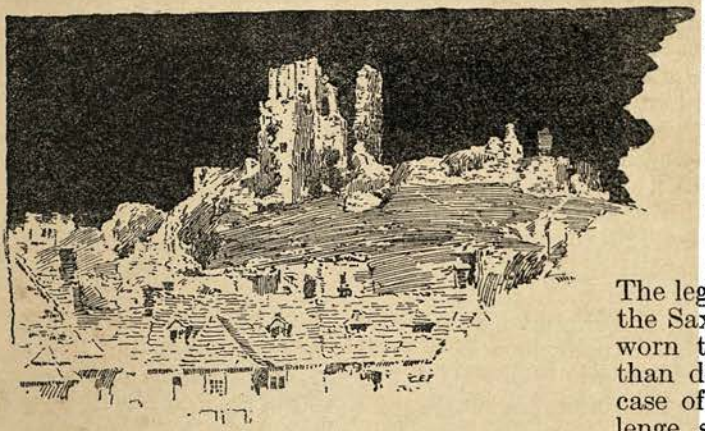
EADWARD THE MARTYR
(963-979)

Eadgar's reign has been celebrated as the most glorious of all the Anglo-Saxon kings. No other sovereign, indeed, converted his prosperity into such personal pomp, and no other sovereign was more degraded in his posterity. With his short life the gaudy pageantry ceased, and all the vast dominion in which he had so ostentatiously exulted, vanished from his children's grasp. His

[1 Eadgar was not crowned until 973, or fourteen years after his elevation to the throne. The cause of this delay is quite uncertain. The well-known story of the penance imposed by Dunstan for the abduction of Wulfrith is not to be taken as an explanation, according to Ramsay,[i] for that penance covered a period of only seven years, while the period here to be accounted for is twice that. It has been suggested that he may have been already crowned king of Mercia and have felt that his coronation as king of all England might well be postponed until some event should have occurred to emphasise or draw attention to the broader extent of his sovereignty.]

eldest son perished by the scheme of his beloved Ælfthryth; his youngest reigned only to show that one weak reign is sufficient to ruin even a brave and great people. Eadgar made kings his watermen; the son of his love five times bought his kingdom from Danish rovers, was the fool of traitors, and surrendered his throne to a foreign invader. Of Eadgar's grandsons, one perished violently soon after his accession. The other was the last of his race who ruled the Anglo-Saxon nation.[u]

Eadward, commonly called the Martyr, who succeeded (975), was Eadgar's son by his first marriage. Like all the kings since Æthelstan, he was a mere boy at his accession, being not more than fourteen or fifteen years old. His rights were disputed in favour of her own son, Æthelred, who was only six years old, by the ambitious and remorseless Ælfthryth, who boldly maintained that Eadward, though the elder brother, and named king in his father's will, was excluded by the illegitimacy of his birth. The legitimacy of several of the Saxon princes who had worn the crown was more than doubtful; but in the case of Eadward the challenge seems to have been unfounded. The cause of Eadward and his half-brother was decided on far different grounds. As soon as Eadgar was dead the church war was renewed, and Dunstan, after a long and unopposed triumph, was compelled once more to descend to the arena with his old opponents, the "married clerks," or secular clergy, who again showed themselves in force in many parts of the kingdom and claimed the abbeys and churches of which they had been dispossessed. The nobles and the governors of provinces chose different sides. Ælfhere, the powerful ealdorman of Mercia, declared for the secular clergy, and drove the monks from every part of his extensive dominions. Æthelwine, of East Anglia, on the contrary, stood by Dunstan and the monks. Ælfthryth, no doubt because Dunstan and his friends had got possession of Eadward, gave the weight of her son Æthelred's name and herself to the party of Ælfhere and the seculars, which soon proved again to be the weaker of the two factions. Had it been the stronger, Æthelred would have been crowned; as it turned out, Dunstan was enabled to place Eadward upon the throne. The perfidious Ælfthryth continued her intrigues with the secular party; she united herself more closely than ever with Ælfhere, the ealdorman of Mercia, and soon saw herself at the head of a powerful confederacy of nobles, who were resolved her son should reign and Dunstan be deprived of that immense power he had so long held. But not even this resolution would prepare us for the horrible catastrophe that followed. About three years after his accession, as Eadward was hunting one day in Dorsetshire, he quitted his company and attendants to visit his half-brother, Æthelred, who was living with his mother, hard by,



CORFE CASTLE

(Scene of the murder of Eadward the Martyr in 979)

[975-979 A.D.]

in Corfe castle. Ælfthryth came forth with her son to meet him at the outer gate: she bade him welcome with a smiling face, and invited him to dismount; but the young king, with thanks, declined, fearing he should be missed by his company, and craved only a cup of wine, which he might drink in his saddle to her and his brother, and so be gone. The wine was brought, and as Eadward was carrying the cup to his lips, one of Ælfthryth's attendants stabbed him in the back. The wounded king put spurs to his horse, but soon, fainting from loss of blood, he fell out of the saddle, and was dragged by one foot in the stirrup through woods and rugged ways until he was dead. His companions in the chase traced him by his blood, and at last found his disfigured corpse, which they burned, and then buried the ashes of it at Wareham, without any pomp or regal ceremonies. "No worse deed than this," says the *Saxon Chronicle*,[x] "had been committed among the people of the Angles since they first came to the land of Britain." It is believed that Ælfhere, the ealdorman of Mercia, with other nobles, opposed to Dunstan and the monks, was engaged with the queen-dowager in a plot to assassinate Eadward, but that Ælfthryth, impatiently seizing an unlooked-for opportunity, took the bloody execution instantly and wholly upon herself.

ÆTHELRED THE UNREADY

The boy Æthelred, who was not ten years old, had no part in the guilt which gave him a crown, though that crown certainly sat upon him like a curse. It is related of him that he dearly loved his half brother Eadward, and wept his death, for which his virago mother, seizing a large torch, beat him with it until he was almost dead himself. Such, however, was the popular odium that fell both on son and mother, that an attempt was made to exclude him from the throne, by substituting Eadgyth, Eadgar's natural daughter by the lady he had stolen from the nunnery of Wilton. This Eadgyth was herself at the time a professed nun in the same monastery from which her mother had been torn; and it is said that nothing but her timidity, and the dread inspired by her brother Eadward's murder, and her firm refusal to exchange the tranquillity of the cell for the dangers of the throne, prevented Dunstan from causing her to be proclaimed queen of all England. There was no other prince of the blood royal—no other pretender to set up; so the prelates and thanes, with no small repugnance, were compelled to bestow the crown on the son of the murderess; and Dunstan, as primate, at the festival of Easter (979) put it on his weak head in the old chapel of Kingston, at this time the usual crowning place of the Saxon monarchs. The vehement monk, who was now soured by age and exasperated at the temporary triumph of his enemies, is said to have pronounced a malediction on Æthelred, even in the act of crowning him, and to have given public vent to a prophecy of woe and misery, which some think was well calculated to insure its own fulfilment; for Dunstan already enjoyed among the nation the reputation of being both a seer and a saint, and the words he dropped could hardly fail of being treasured in the memory of the people, and of depressing their spirits at the approach of danger. Æthelred, moreover, began his reign with an unlucky nickname, which it is believed was given him by Dunstan—he was called the Unready.[1] His personal and moral qualities were not calculated to

[1] The title "Unready," which is applied to Æthelred, does not mean unready in our sense of the word. Green[k] says that it was his stubborn opposition throughout his reign to the

overcome a bad prestige, and the unpopular circumstances attending his succession: in him the people lost their warm affection for the blood of Alfred, and by degrees many of them contemplated with indifference, if not with pleasure, the transfer of the crown to a prince of Danish race. This latter feeling more than half explains the events of his reign. During the first part of the minority the infamous Ælfthryth enjoyed great authority, but as the king advanced in years her influence declined, and, followed by the execrations of nobles and people (even by those of her own party), she at last retired to expiate her sins, according to the fashion of the times, in building and endowing monasteries.

RENEWAL OF THE DANISH INVASIONS

Although the Northmen settled in the Danelagh had so frequently troubled the peace of the kingdom, and had probably at no period renounced the hope of gaining an ascendency over the Saxons of the island, and placing a king of their own race on the throne of England, the Danes beyond sea had certainly made no formidable attacks since the time of Æthelstan, and of late years had scarcely been heard of. This suspension of hostility on their part is not to be attributed solely to the wisdom and valour of the intermediate Saxon kings. There were great political causes connected with the histories of Norway and Denmark, and France and Normandy; and circumstances which, by giving the Danes employment and settlement in other countries, kept them away from England. But now, unfortunately, there was neither wisdom nor valour in the king and council, nor spirit in the people.

Sweyn, a son of the king of Denmark, had quarrelled with his father, and been banished from his home. Young, brave, and enterprising, he soon collected a host of mariners and adventurers round his standard, with whom he resolved to obtain wealth, if not a home in England. His first operations were on a small scale, intended merely to try the state of defence of the island, and were probably not conducted by himself.

In the third year of Æthelred's reign (981) the Danish raven was seen floating in Southampton Water, and that city was plundered and its inhabitants carried into slavery. In the course of a few months Chester and London partook of the fate of Southampton, and attacks were multiplied on different points—in the north, in the south, and in the west—as far as the extremity of Cornwall. These operations were continued for some years, during which Æthelred seems to have been much occupied by quarrels with his bishops and nobles. Ælfhere, the Mercian, who had conspired with Ælfthryth against Eadward the Martyr, was dead, and his extensive earldom had fallen to his son Ælfric, a notorious name in these annals. In consequence of a conspiracy, real or alleged, Ælfric was banished. The weak king was soon obliged to recall him, but the revengeful nobleman never forgot the past. In the year 991 a more formidable host of the sea-kings ravaged all that part of East Anglia that lay between Ipswich and Maldon, and won a great battle, in which Earl Brithnoth was slain. Æthelred then, for the first time, had recourse

efforts of the great ealdormen to control him, and his persistence in setting aside their *rede* or counsel, that earned him the title of Unraedig, or the counsel-lacking king, which a later blunder turned into the title of Unready. "Unready, shiftless, without resource, Æthelred never was. His difficulties indeed sprang in no small degree from the quickness and ingenuity with which he met one danger by measures that created another."]

[991-1001 A.D.]

to the fatal expedient of purchasing their forbearance with money. Ten thousand pounds of silver were paid down, and the sea-kings departed for a while, carrying with them the head of Earl Brithnoth as a trophy. In the course of the following year the witenagemot adopted a wiser plan of defence. A formidable fleet was collected at London, and well manned and supplied with arms. But this wise measure was defeated by Ælfric the Mercian, who, in his hatred to the king, had opened a correspondence with the Danes, and being intrusted with a principal command in the fleet, he went over to them on the eve of a battle, with many of his ships. The traitor escaped, and Æthelred wreaked his savage vengeance on Ælfgar, the son of Ælfric, whose eyes he put out. In 993 a Danish host landed in the north, and took Bamborough castle by storm. Three chiefs, of Danish origin, who had been appointed to command the natives, threw down the standard of Æthelred and ranged themselves under the Danish raven. All through Northumbria, and the rest of the Danelagh, the Danish settlers either joined their still pagan brethren from the Baltic, or offered them no resistance. In the mean time the fortunes of Sweyn the exile had undergone a change. By the murder of his father he had ascended the throne of Denmark, and, formidable himself, he had gained a powerful ally in Olaf, king of Norway. In 994 the two North kings ravaged all the southern provinces of the island. It was again agreed to treat, and buy them off with money. Their pretensions of course rose, and this time sixteen thousand pounds of silver were exacted and paid. By a clause in the treaty, Olaf and some chiefs were bound to embrace the Christian religion. Sweyn had been baptised already more than once, and had relapsed to idolatry. One of the chiefs boasted that he had been washed twenty times in the water of baptism, by which we are to understand that the marauder had submitted to what he considered an idle ceremony, whenever it suited his convenience. Olaf, the Norwegian king, however, stood at the font with a better spirit; his conversion was sincere; and an oath he there took, never again to molest the English, was honourably kept. During the four following years the Danes continued their desultory invasions; and when (in 998) Æthelred had got ready a strong fleet and army to oppose them, some of his own officers gave the plunderers timely warning, and they retreated unhurt. On their next returning in force (1001), Æthelred seems to have had neither fleet nor army in a condition to meet them; for, after two conflicts by land, they were allowed to ravage the whole kingdom from the Isle of Wight to the Bristol Channel, and then they were stayed, not by steel, but by gold. Their price of course still rose; this time twenty-four thousand pounds were paid to purchase their departure. These large sums were raised by direct taxation upon land; and the "Dane-geld," as it was called, was an oppressive and humiliating burden that became permanent. Nor was this all. The treaties of peace or truce generally allowed bands of the marauders to winter in the island, at Southampton or some other town; and during their stay the English people, whom they had plundered and beggared, were obliged to feed them. Their appetites had not decreased since the days of Guthrum and Hasting.

As if the Danes were not enemies enough, Æthelred had engaged in hostilities with Richard II, duke of Normandy, and had even, at one time, prepared an armament to invade his dominions. The quarrel was made up by the mediation of the pope; and then the English king, who was a widower, thought of strengthening his hands by marrying Emma, the duke of Normandy's sister. The alliance, which laid the first grounds for the pretext of Norman claims on England afterwards pressed by William the Conqueror, was

readily accepted by Duke Richard, and in the spring of 1002 Emma, "the Flower of Normandy," as she was styled, arrived at the court of Æthelred, where she was received with great pomp.[1]

THE MASSACRE OF ST. BRICE'S DAY

The long rejoicings for this marriage were scarcely over, when a memorable atrocity covered the land with amazement, blood, and horror. This was the sudden massacre of the Danes, perpetrated by the people with whom they were living intermixed as fellow subjects. It is universally asserted that the plot was laid beforehand, the fatal order given by the king himself; and there is little in Æthelred's general conduct and character to awaken a doubt in his favour. At the same time, be it observed, the people must have been as guilty, as secret, as treacherous, as cruel as the king, and must have entered fully into the spirit which dictated the bloody order of which they were to be the executioners. Such being the case, we think they were fully equal to the conception of the plot themselves, and that, from the loose, unguarded manner in which the Danes lived scattered among them, such a mode of disposing of them would naturally suggest itself to a very imperfectly civilised people, maddened by the harsh treatment and insults of their invaders. In the simultaneous massacre of the French invaders all over Sicily, in 1282, the same mystery was observed; but it is still a matter of doubt whether the "Sicilian Vespers" were ordered by John da Procida, or sprung spontaneously from the people. These two cases, which belong alike to the class of the terrible acts of vengeance that signalise a nation's despair, are nearly parallel in their circumstances; and in England, as afterwards in Sicily, it was the insults offered by the invaders to their women that extinguished the last sentiments of humanity in the hearts of the people. The outrages of the Danish pagans were extreme. According to the old chroniclers, they made the English yeomanry among whom they were settled perform the most menial offices for them; they held their houses as their own, and, eating and drinking of the best, scantly left the real proprietor his fill of the worst; the peasantry were so sorely oppressed that, out of fear and dread, they called them, in every house where they had rule, "Lord Danes." Their wives and daughters were everywhere a prey to their lust, and when the English made resistance or remonstrance, they were killed, or beaten and laughed at. All this description seems to point at soldiers and adventurers, and men recently settled in the land, and not to the converted married Danes, who had been living a long time in different parts of the country (as well as in the Danelagh, where they were too numerous to be touched), who had contracted quiet, orderly habits, and successfully cultivated the friendship of the English. It was resolved, however, to destroy them all at one blow; the good with the bad, the innocent infant at the breast with the hardened ruffian, the neighbour of years with the intruder of yesterday. As the story is told, Æthelred sent secretly to all his good burghs, cities, and towns, charging the rulers thereof to rise, all on a fixed day and hour, and, by falling suddenly on the Danes, exterminate them from the land by sword and fire. By what-

[1 "Here," says Freeman, *i* "was the beginning of the causes which led to the Norman Conquest. Emma brought with her Norman followers, some of whom were trusted with commands in England. The kindred between the ruling families of the two lands which came of the marriage of Emma led to increased intercourse between Normandy and England, to Norman interference with English affairs, to the settlement of Normans in England, to the claims of Duke William, and to the Norman Conquest."]

[1002-1004 A.D.]

ever means this simultaneous movement was arranged, it certainly took place. On November 13, 1002 (the holy festival of St. Brice), the Danes, dispersed through a great part of England, were attacked by surprise, and massacred, without distinction of quality, age, or sex, by their hosts and neighbours. Gunhild, the sister of Sweyn, king of Denmark, who had embraced Christianity and married an English earl of Danish descent, after being made to witness the murder of her husband and child, was barbarously murdered herself.

SWEYN'S CONQUEST

This tale of horror was soon wafted across the ocean, where Sweyn prepared for a deadly revenge. He assembled a fleet more numerous than any that had hitherto invaded England. The Danish warriors considered the cause a national and sacred one; and in the assembled host there was not a slave, or an emancipated slave, or a single old man, but every combatant was a freeman, the son of a freeman, and in the prime of life. These warriors embarked in lofty ships, every one of which bore the ensign or standard of its separate commander. Some carried at their prow such figures as lions, bulls, dolphins, dragons, or armed men, all made of metal, and gaily gilded; others carried on their topmast-head the figures of eagles and ravens, that stretched out their wings and turned with the wind; the sides of the ships were painted with different bright colours, and, larboard and starboard, from stem to stern, shields of burnished steel were suspended in even lines, and glittered in the sun. Gold, silver, and embroidered banners were profusely displayed, and the whole wealth of the pirates of the Baltic was made to contribute to this barbaric pomp. The ship that bore the royal standard of Sweyn was moulded in the form of an enormous serpent, the sharp head of which formed the prow, while the lengthening tail coiled over the poop. It was called "The Great Dragon."

The first place where the avengers landed was near Exeter, and that important city was presently surrendered to them, through the treachery of Æthelred's governor, a Norman nobleman, and one of the train of favourites and dependents that had followed Queen Emma. After plundering and dismantling Exeter, the Danes marched into Wiltshire. In all the towns and villages through which they passed, after gaily eating the repasts the Saxons were forced to prepare for them, they slew their hosts, and, departing, set fire to their houses. At last an Anglo-Saxon army was brought up to oppose their destructive progress; but this force was commanded by another traitor—by Ælfric the Mercian. He had been restored to favour and employment, but now took the opportunity offered him for further revenge on the king. He pretended to be seized with a sudden illness, called off his men when they were about to join battle, and permitted Sweyn to retire with his army and his immense booty through Salisbury to the seacoast. In the following year Norwich was taken, plundered, and burned, and the same fate befell nearly every town in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, and Lincolnshire. The Danes then (1004) returned to the Baltic, retreating from a famine which their devastations had caused in England.

By marrying the Norman princess Emma, Æthelred had hoped to secure the assistance of her brother, Duke Richard, against the Danes; but it was soon found that the only Normans who crossed the channel were a set of intriguing, ambitious courtiers, hungry for English places and honours; and by his inconstancy and neglect of his wife, Æthelred so irritated that princess that she made bitter complaints to her brother, and caused a fresh quarrel

between England and Normandy. Duke Richard seized all the native English who chanced to be in his dominions, and after shamefully killing some, threw the rest into prison.

In 1006 Sweyn returned, and carried fire and sword over a great part of the kingdom; and when it was resolved in the great council to buy him off with gold, £36,000 was the sum demanded. The frequent raising of these large sums utterly exhausted the people, whose doors were almost constantly beset either by the king's tax-gatherers or the Danish marauders. Those few who had, as yet, the good fortune of escaping the pillage of the Danes, could not now escape the exactions of Æthelred, and, under one form or another, they were sure of being plundered of all they possessed.

In 1008 the people were oppressed with a new burden. Every 310 hides of land were charged with the building and equipping of one ship for the defence of the kingdom; and in addition to this, every nine hides of land were bound to provide one man, armed with a helmet and iron breastplate. If all the land had supplied its proper contingent, more than 800 ships and about 35,000 armed men would have been provided. The force actually raised appears to have been large; some of the old writers stating, particularly as to the marine, that there never were so many ships got together in England before. This fleet, however, was soon rendered valueless by dissensions and treachery at home, and thus perished the last hope of England.[1]

As soon as the intelligence of this disaster reached the mouth of the Baltic, a large army of Danes, called, from their leader, "Thurkill's host," set sail for England, where, during the three following years, they committed incalculable mischief, and by the end of that period had made themselves masters of a large part of the kingdom. They now and then sold short and uncertain truces to the Saxons, but they never evinced an intention of leaving the island, as Sweyn had left it on former occasions. As Æthelred's difficulties increased, he seems, at last, not to have had a single officer on whom he could depend. During this lamentable period, a noble instance of courage and firmness occurred in the person of a churchman. Ælfheah (Alphege), archbishop of Canterbury, defended that city for twenty days, and when a traitor opened its gates to the Danes, and he was made prisoner and loaded with chains, he refused to purchase liberty and life with gold, which he knew must be wrung from the people. The Danes, more covetous of money than desirous of his blood, frequently renewed their demands. "You press me in vain," said Ælfheah; "I am not the man to provide Christian flesh for pagan teeth, by robbing my poor countrymen to enrich their enemies." The Danes at length lost patience, and one day, when they were assembled at a drunken banquet, they caused him to be dragged into their presence. "Gold, bishop! give us gold! gold!" was their cry, as they gathered about him in menacing attitudes. Still unmoved, he looked round that circle of fierce men, who presently broke up in rage and disorder, and running to a heap of bones, horns, and jawbones, the remains of their gross feast, they threw these things at him, until he fell to the ground half dead. A Danish pirate, whom he had previously baptised with his own hands, then took his battle-axe and put an end to the agony and life of Archbishop Ælfheah.

This heroic example had no effect upon King Æthelred, who continued to pay gold as before. After receiving £48,000, and the formal cession of several

[1 The stories accounting for its loss differ. It seems to have been due to a rivalry between Earl Wulfnoth and Brihtric, one of Æthelred's favourites, who placed their personal quarrels above the necessity of their country, and after deserting with a great part of the ships, fell to fighting each other.]

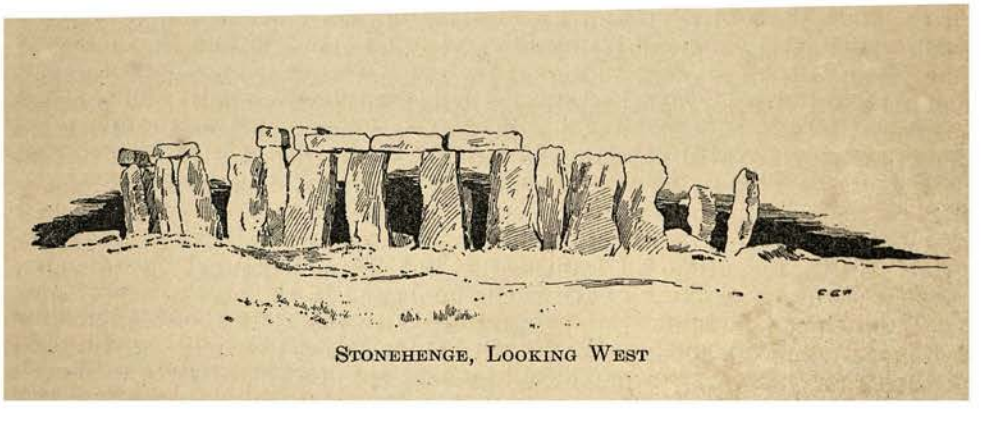
[1012–1016 A.D.]

counties Thurkill took the oaths of peace, and became, with many of his chiefs and a large detachment of his host, the ally and soldier of the weak Saxon monarch. It is probable that Earl Thurkill entered the service of Æthelred for the purpose of betraying him, and acted all along in concert with Sweyn; but the Danish king affected to consider the compact as treason to himself, and, with a show of jealousy towards Thurkill, prepared a fresh expedition, which he gave out was equally directed against Æthelred and his vassal Thurkill. The fact, at all events, was that Sweyn, who had so often swept the land from east to west, from north to south, had now resolved to attempt the permanent conquest of the land. He sailed up the Humber with a numerous and splendid fleet, and landed as near as he could to the city of York. As the Danes advanced into the country they stuck their lances into the soil, or threw them into the current of the rivers, in sign of their entire domination over England. Nearly all the inhabitants of the Danelagh joined them at once: the men of Northumbria, Lindsey, and the Five Burghs welcomed the banner of Sweyn, and finally all the "host" north of Watling Street took up arms in his favour. Even the provinces in the centre of England, where the Danish settlers or troops were far less numerous, prepared themselves for a quiet surrender. Leaving his fleet to the care of his son Canute, Sweyn conducted the main body of his army to the south. Oxford, Winchester, and other important towns threw open their gates at his approach; but he was obliged to retire from before the walls of London and the determined valour of its citizens, among whom the king had taken refuge. Sweyn then turned to the west, where he was received with open arms. The ealdormen of Devonshire and nearly every other thane in that part of the kingdom repaired to his headquarters at Bath, and did homage to him as their lawful or chosen sovereign. Seeing the whole kingdom falling from him, Æthelred abandoned London, which soon followed the general example and submitted to the Danes. This unready king then fled to the Isle of Wight, whence he secretly sent his children with Emma, his Norman wife, to the court of her brother at Rouen. The duke of Normandy not only received Emma and her children with great kindness, but offered a safe asylum to Æthelred, which that luckless prince was fain to accept as his only resource.

Sweyn was now (1013) acknowledged as "full king of England"; but the power which had been obtained with so much labour, and at the xpense of so much bloodshed and wretchedness, remained to the conqueror a very short time. He died suddenly at Gainsborough; and, only six weeks after the time when he had been allowed to depart for Normandy, "abandoned, deserted, and betrayed" by all, Æthelred was invited by the Saxon nobles and prelates to return and take possession of his kingdom, which was pledged to his defence and support—provided only that he would govern them better than he had done before. Pledges were exchanged for the faithful performance of the new compact between king and people. Before the end of Lent, Æthelred was restored to those dominions which he had already misgoverned thirty-five years. In the meantime the Danish army in England had proclaimed Canute, the son of Sweyn, as king of the whole land; and in the northern provinces they and their adherents were in a condition to maintain the election they had made. Indeed, north of Watling Street the Danes were all-powerful; and Canute, though beset by some difficulties, was not of a character to relinquish his hold of the kingdom without a hard struggle. A sanguinary warfare was renewed, and murdering and bribing, betraying and betrayed, Æthelred was fast losing ground, when he died of disease, about three years after his return from Normandy.

EADMUND IRONSIDE

The law of succession continued as loose as ever; and in seasons of extreme difficulty like the present, when so much depended on the personal character and valour of the sovereign, it was altogether neglected or despised. Setting aside Æthelred's legitimate children, the Saxons chose for their king a natural son, Eadmund, surnamed Ironside, who had already given many proofs of courage in the field and wisdom in the council. By general consent, indeed, Eadmund was a hero; but the country was too much worn out and divided, and the treasons that had torn his father's court and camp were too prevalent in his own to permit of his restoring Saxon independence throughout the kingdom. After twice relieving London, when besieged by Canute and all his host, and fighting five pitched battles with unvarying valour, but with various success, Ironside proposed that he and his rival should decide their claims in a single combat, saying "it was pity so many lives should be lost and perilled for their ambition." Canute declined the duel, saying that he, as a man of slender make, would stand no chance with the stalwart Eadmund; and he added, that it would be wiser and better for them both to divide England between them, even as their forefathers had done in other times. This proposal is said to have been received with enthusiastic joy by both armies; and however the negotiation may have been conducted, and whatever was the precise line of demarcation settled between them, it was certainly agreed that Canute should reign over the north, and Eadmund Ironside over the south, with a nominal superiority over the Dane's portion. The brave Eadmund did not survive the treaty more than two months. His death, which took place on the feast of St. Andrew, was sudden and mysterious. As Canute profited so much by it as to become sole monarch of England immediately after, it is generally believed he planned his assassination; but judging from the old chroniclers who lived at or near the time, it is not clear who were the contrivers and actual perpetrators of the deed, or whether he was killed at all. There is even a doubt as to the place of his death, whether it was London or Oxford.[c]



STONEHENGE, LOOKING WEST

CHAPTER IV

THE DANISH AND LATER ENGLISH KINGS

[1017–1066 A.D.]

WHEN in November, 1016, the death of Eadmund removed the one strong obstacle to Canute's assumption of the rule of all England, the Danish king was only about twenty-one years old. But, as has been often remarked, he was one of those men who are never young. From our very first knowledge of him his sagacity and far-seeing mark him as a man of mature judgment. And nowhere in his career is this trait shown more clearly than in his action on learning of the death of Eadmund. His own armies possessed the north of England; the south, without a leader, lay prostrate before him. He could have made good his conquest by force of arms. But to one as completely guided by motives of policy as was Canute such a move did not appeal. "He was fully impressed," says Freeman,[k] "with the value of constitutional forms. He was determined to be king of all England; he was equally determined not to parade the right of conquest offensively before the eyes of his subjects, but to rest his claim to the crown on an authority which no man could gainsay."

CANUTE CHOSEN KING (1017 A.D.)

His first act, therefore, was one typical of the man. He issued a summons for a grand witenagemot of all England to meet him in London. Before this assembly he placed frankly the question of the succession, in a way that could not fail to dispose in his favour men whose cherished and long-exercised rights in regard to the choice of their king he thus apparently recognised. First he asked those who had been present at the convention, in which the partition treaty between Eadmund and himself had been arranged, whether

at that time any rights had been reserved to the sons or brothers of Eadmund. Without a single dissenting voice the reply came that the question of succession had not been touched upon. Furthermore, it was declared that Canute had been named as the guardian of Eadmund's children during their minority. We do not know how far the members of the witan acted without constraint or how much they were influenced by promises or personal interest. But nothing could have been more favourable to Canute, and he was at once declared the lawful sovereign of all England.[a]

The most imperfect and faint semblance of a right being thus established, the Saxon chiefs took an oath of fidelity to Canute as king; and Canute, in return, swore to be just and benevolent, and clasped their hands with his naked hand, in sign of sincerity. A full amnesty was promised; but the promise had scarcely passed the royal lips ere Canute began to proscribe those whom he had promised to love. The principal of the Saxon chiefs who had formerly opposed him and the relations of Eadmund and Æthelred were banished or put to death. The witenagemot or parliament, which had so recently passed the same sentence against the Danish princes, now excluded all the descendants of Æthelred from the throne. They declared Eadwig, a grown-up brother of Ironside, an outlaw, and when he was pursued and murdered by Canute, they tacitly acknowledged the justice of that execution.

Eadmund and Eadward, the two infant sons of the deceased king, Eadmund Ironside, were seized, and a feeling of shame, mingled perhaps with some fear of the popular odium, preventing him from murdering them in England, Canute sent them over sea to his ally and vassal, the king of Sweden, whom he requested to dispose of them in such a manner as should remove his uneasiness on their account. He meant that they should be murdered; but the Swedish king, moved by the innocence of the little children, instead of executing the horrid commission, sent them to the distant court of the king of Hungary, where they were affectionately and honourably entertained, beyond the reach of Canute. Of these two orphans, Eadmund died without issue, but Eadward married a daughter of the German emperor, by whom he became father to Eadgar Ætheling, Christina, and Margaret. Eadgar will be frequently mentioned in our subsequent pages; Margaret became the wife of Malcolm, king of Scotland, and through her the rights of the line of Alfred and Cerdic were transmitted to Malcolm's progeny, after the Norman conquest of England.

There were still two princes whose claims to the crown might some day disquiet Canute, but they were out of his reach, in Normandy. These were Eadward and Ælfred, the sons of King Æthelred by Emma. Their uncle Richard, the Norman duke, at first sent an embassy to the Dane, demanding, on their behalf, the restitution of the kingdom; but, though his power was great, he adopted no measures likely to induce Canute to a surrender or partition of the territories he was actually possessed of: and very soon after he entered into close and friendly negotiations with that enemy of his nephews, and even offered him their own mother and his sister in marriage. According to some historians, the first overtures to this unnatural marriage, which was followed by most unnatural consequences, proceeded from Canute. However this may be, the Dane wooed the widowed "Flower of Normandy"; and the heartless Emma, forgetful of the children she had borne, and only anxious to become again the wife of a king, readily gave her hand to the man who had caused the ruin and hastened the death of her husband Æthelred.

Having soon become the mother of another son, by Canute, this Norman woman neglected and despised her first-born; and those two princes, being

detained at a distance from England, became by degrees strangers to their own country, forgot its language and its manners, and grew up Normans instead of Saxons. The Danish dynasty of Canute was not destined to take root; but the circumstance just alluded to most essentially contributed to place a long line of Norman princes upon the throne of England.[b]

CANUTE'S PEACEFUL REIGN

The personal character of Canute, his gradual change from a barbarian conqueror into a king who stood beside Alfred in the memory of his people, makes him one of the most interesting studies in our whole history. But we have here to deal mainly with the political results of his accession. England was now brought more closely than ever into relations with other parts of the world. But those relations took a shape which was altogether new and unexpected. Canute was a conqueror, and his establishment in England was a conquest, so far as that a foreign king made his way to the English crown at the sword's point. But, when he had once made himself safe on the throne, there was nothing more of the conqueror about him. England was neither oppressed nor degraded under his rule. His government, his laws, were framed after the pattern of those of the ancient kings. He sent home his Danish army, keeping only a body of chosen guards, the famous housecarls. These were the first standing army known in England, a body of picked men, Danes, Englishmen, or brave men from any quarter. Canute gradually displaced the Danes, whom he had at first placed in high offices, and gave them English successors. He raised an Englishman, the renowned Godwin, to a place second only to kingship, with the new title of Earl of the West-Saxons. In her foreign relations England under her Danish king was in no sense a dependency of Denmark. England was the centre, Winchester was the imperial city, of a northern empire which rivalled those of the East and the West. Canute, it must be remembered, was chosen to the crown of England first of all while still very young. To that crown he added the crown of Denmark, on the death or deposition of his brother Harold. He won Norway, which had revolted against his father, from its king, Olaf; and he seems to have established his power over part of Sweden and other parts of the Baltic lands. But all these were acquisitions made by one who was already "king of all England"; they were largely won by English valour, and the complaint in Denmark and elsewhere was that Canute made his northern kingdoms subordinate to England, and preferred Englishmen rather than natives to high offices in them.[7]

Canute's last military expedition (1017–1019) was against the Cumbrians and Scots. Duncan, the regulus or under-king of Cumbria, refused homage and allegiance to the Dane, on the ground that he was a usurper; and Malcolm, king of Scotland, equally maintained that the English throne belonged of right to the legitimate heir of King Æthelred. Had the powerful duke of Normandy seconded these demonstrations in favour of his nephews, Canute's crown might have been put in jeopardy; but the Cumbrians and Scots were left to themselves, and compelled to submit, in the face of a most formidable army which the Dane had collected.

These constant successes and the enjoyment of peace which followed them, together with the sobering influence of increasing years, though he was yet in the prime of manhood, softened the conqueror's heart; and though he continued to rule despotically, the latter part of his reign was marked with no

acts of cruelty, and was probably, on the whole, a happier time than the English had known since the days of Alfred and Æthelstan. He was cheerful and accessible to all his subjects, without distinction of race or nation. He took pleasure in old songs and ballads of which both Danes and Saxons were passionately fond; he most liberally patronised the skalds, minstrels, and glee-men, the poets and musicians of the time, and occasionally wrote verses himself, which were orally circulated among the common people, and taken up and sung by them. He could scarcely have hit upon a surer road to popularity. A ballad of his composition continued long after to be a special favourite with the English peasantry. All of it is lost except the first verse, which has been preserved in the *Historia Eliensis*,[aa] or *History of Ely*. The interesting royal fragment is simply this:

> Merrily sung the monks within Ely,
> When Canute king rowed thereby.
> Row, my knights, row near the land,
> And hear we these monks' song.

In his days of quiet, the devotion of the times had also its full influence on the character of Canute. This son of an apostate Christian showed himself a zealous believer, a friend to the monks, a visitor and collector of relics, a founder of churches and monasteries. His soul was assailed with remorse for the blood he had shed and the other crimes he had committed; and, in the year 1030, he determined to make a pilgrimage to Rome.

He started on his journey to the Holy City with a wallet on his back and a pilgrim's staff in his hand. He visited all the most celebrated churches on the road between the Low Countries and Rome, leaving at every one of them some proof of his liberality. According to a foreign chronicler, all the people on his way had reason to exclaim, "The blessing of God be upon the king of the English!" But no one tells us how dearly this munificence cost the English people. Returning from Rome, where he resided a considerable time, he purchased, in the city of Pavia, the arm of St. Augustine, "the Great Doctor." This precious relic, for which he paid 100 talents of gold and 100 talents of silver, he afterwards presented to the church of Coventry—an act of liberality by which, no doubt, he gained many friends and many prayers. On recrossing the Alps, Canute did not make his way direct to England, but went to his other kingdom of Denmark, where he remained some months. He, however, despatched the abbot of Tavistock to England with a long letter of explanation, command, and advice, addressed "to all the nation of the English, both nobles and commoners." This curious letter begins with explaining the motives of his pilgrimage, and the nature of the sacred omnipotence of the Church of Rome. It concludes:

> And now, therefore, be it known to you all, that I have dedicated my life to God, to govern my kingdoms with justice, and to observe the right in all things. If, in the time that is passed, and in the violence and carelessness of youth, I have violated justice, it is my intention, by the help of God, to make full compensation. Therefore I beg and command those unto whom I have intrusted the government, as they wish to preserve my good-will, and save their own souls, to do no injustice either to rich or poor. Let those who are noble, and those who are not, equally obtain their rights, according to the laws—from which no deviation shall be allowed, either from fear of me, or through favour to the powerful, or for the purpose of supplying my treasury. I want no money raised by injustice.

It does not clearly appear whether the old writers refer the following oft-repeated incident to a period preceding or one subsequent to this Roman pilgrimage. When at the height of his power, and when all things seemed

to bend to his lordly will (so goes the story), Canute, disgusted one day with the extravagant flatteries of his courtiers, determined to read them a practical lesson. He caused his throne to be placed on the verge of the sands on the seashore, as the tide was rolling in with its resistless might, and seating himself, he addressed the ocean, and said: "Ocean! the land on which I sit is mine, and thou art a part of my dominion, therefore rise not—obey my commands, nor presume to wet the edge of my robe." He sat for some time as if expecting obedience, but the sea rolled on in its immutable course, succeeding waves broke nearer and nearer to his feet, till at length the skirts of his garments and his legs were bathed by the waters. Then, turning to his courtiers and captains, Canute said: "Confess ye now how frivolous and vain is the might of an earthly king compared to that great Power who rules the elements, and can say unto the ocean, 'Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther.'" The chroniclers conclude the apologue by adding that he immediately took off his crown, and depositing it in the cathedral of Winchester never wore it again. This great Danish sovereign died in 1035, at Shaftesbury, about three years after his return from Rome, and was buried at Winchester.[b]

THE DANISH SUCCESSION

From this period indeed it would be useless to draw distinctions between the Saxon and Danish races. In regard to language we may believe that the dialect of the later settlers of Northumbria and East Anglia became blended with that of the earlier settlers of Wessex and Mercia. In the same way the several races became gradually intermixed. We may accept the statement [of Worsaæ,[i] the famous Danish antiquary] of a striking fact "that the inhabitants of the north of England bear, on the whole, more than those of any other part of that country, an unmistakable personal resemblance to the Danes and Norwegians." Still the conclusion is tolerably clear that the main bulk and body of the English nation is Saxon. From this period, therefore, when the contest of two centuries between Saxon and Dane came to an end, we shall consider the Danish population as a part of the great Anglo-Saxon family, with whom they had at last become identical in the possession of a common country and a common religion.[h]

On Canute's demise there was the usual difficulty and contention respecting the succession. He left but one legitimate son, Harthacnut, whom he had by Æthelred's widow, the lady Emma of Normandy. He had two illegitimate sons, Svend and Harold. In royal families bastardy was a very slight objection in those days; but according to the contemporary writers, it was the prevalent belief, or popular scandal, that these two young men were not the children of Canute, even illegitimately, but were imposed upon him as such by his acknowledged concubine Alfgiva, daughter of the ealdorman of Southampton, who, according to this gossip, knew full well that Svend was the son of a priest by another woman, and Harold the offspring of a cobbler and his wife. Whoever were their fathers and mothers, it is certain that Canute intended that his dominions should be divided among the three young men, and this without any apparent prejudice in favour of legitimacy; for Harold, and not Harthacnut, the lawful son, was to have England, which was esteemed by far the best portion. Denmark was to fall to Harthacnut, and Norway to Svend. Both these princes were in the north of Europe, and apparently in possession of power there, when Canute died. The powerful Earl Godwin, and the Saxons of the south generally, wished rather to choose for king of England either one

of the sons of Æthelred, who were still in Normandy, or Harthacnut, the son of Emma, who was at least connected with the old Saxon line. But Earl Leofric of Mercia, with the thanes north of the Thames, and all the Danes, supported the claims of the illegitimate Harold; and when the influential city of London[1] took this side, the cause of Harthacnut seemed almost hopeless. But still all the men of the south and the great Earl Godwin adhered to the latter, and a civil war was imminent, when it was wisely determined to effect a compromise by means of the witenagemot. This assembly met at Oxford, and there decided that Harold should have all the provinces north of the Thames, with London for his capital, while all the country south of that river should remain to Harthacnut.

Harthacnut, showing no anxiety for his dominions in England, lingered in Denmark, where the habits of the Scandinavian chiefs, and their hard drinking, were to his taste; but his mother Emma and Earl Godwin governed in the south on his behalf, and held a court at Winchester. Harold, however, who saw his superiority over his absent half-brother, took his measures for attaching the provinces of the south to his dominions, and two fruitless invasions from Normandy only tended to increase his power and facilitate that aggrandisement.

Soon after the news of Canute's death reached Normandy, Edward, the eldest of the surviving sons of Æthelred by Emma, who eventually became king of England under the title of Edward the Confessor, made sail for England with a few ships, and landed at Southampton, in the intention of claiming the crown. He threw himself in the midst of his mother's retainers, and was within a few miles of her residence at Winchester. But Emma had no affection for her children by Æthelred; she was at the moment making every exertion to secure the English throne for her son by Canute, and, instead of aiding Edward, she set the whole country in hostile array against him. He escaped with some difficulty from a formidable force, and fled back to Normandy, determined, it is said, never again to touch the soil of his fathers.

The second invasion from Normandy was attended with more tragical results, and part of the history of it is enveloped in an impenetrable mystery. An affectionate letter, purporting to be written by the queen-mother, Emma, was conveyed to her sons Edward and Ælfred, reproaching them with their apathy, and urging that one of them at least should return to England and assert his right against the tyrant Harold. This letter is pronounced a forgery by the old writer who preserves it; but those who are disposed to take the darkest view of Emma's character may object that this writer was a paid encomiast of that queen, and therefore not likely to confess her guilty of being a participator in her own son's murder, even if such were the fact.

For ourselves, although she did not escape the strong suspicion of her contemporaries, any more than Earl Godwin, who was then in close alliance with her, we rather incline to the belief that the letter was forged by the order of Harold, though, again, there is a possibility that it may have been actually the production of the queen, who may have meant no harm to her son, and that the harm he suffered may have fallen upon him through Godwin, on that chief's seeing how he came attended. However this may be, Ælfred, the younger of the two brothers, accepted the invitation. The instructions of

[1 The importance of the city of London as a political power that was so often in the succeeding centuries to decide the fates of kings and lines of kings, here for the first time manifested itself. "The new attitude of London," remarks Green, "marked a decisive and important change. From the moment that London sided not with Wessex but with England, the relation of parties was altered, and the ultimate victory of the national will over provincial jealousies could be no longer doubtful."]

[1036 A.D.]

Emma's letter were to come without any armament; but he raised a considerable force in Normandy and Boulogne. When he appeared off Sandwich there was a far superior force there, which rendered his landing hopeless. He therefore bore round the North Foreland, and disembarked "opposite to Canterbury."

Having advanced some distance up the country without any opposition, he was met by Earl Godwin, who is said to have sworn faith to him, and to have undertaken to conduct him to his mother Emma. Avoiding London, where the party of Harold was predominant, they marched to Guildford, where Godwin billeted the strangers, in small parties of tens and scores, in different houses of the town. There was plenty of meat and drink prepared in every lodging, and Earl Godwin, taking his leave for the night, promised his dutiful attendance on Ælfred for the following morning. Tired with the day's journey, and filled with meat and wine, the separated company went to bed suspecting no wrong; but in the dead of night, when disarmed and buried in sleep, they were suddenly set upon by King Harold's forces, who seized and bound them all with chains and gyves. On the following morning they were ranged in a line before the executioners. There are said to have been six hundred victims, and, with the exception of every tenth man, they were all barbarously tortured and massacred. Prince Ælfred was reserved for a still more cruel fate. He was hurried away to London, where Harold personally insulted him; and from London he was sent to the isle of Ely. He made the sad journey mounted on a wretched horse, naked, and with his feet tied beneath the animal's belly. At Ely he was arraigned before a mock court of Danish miscreants as a disturber of the country's peace, and was condemned to lose his eyes. His eyes were instantly torn out by main force, and he died a few days after. Some believe that Earl Godwin was guilty of betraying, or at least deserting the prince after he had landed in England, without having premeditated treachery in inviting him over; and they say his change of sentiment took place the instant he saw that Ælfred, instead of coming alone to throw himself on the affections of the Saxon people, had surrounded himself with a host of ambitious foreigners, all eager to share in the wealth and honours of the land. Henry of Huntingdon,[e] a writer of the twelfth century, supports this not irrational view of the case, and says that Godwin told his Saxon followers that Ælfred came escorted by too many Normans, and that it would be an act of imprudence to permit this race of foreigners to gain a footing in England. Shortly after the murder of Ælfred, Emma was either sent out of England by Harold, or retired a voluntary exile. It is to be remarked that she did not fix her residence in Normandy, where her son Edward, brother of Ælfred, was living, but went to the court of Baldwin, earl of Flanders.

HAROLD HAREFOOT
(From ancient coin)

Harold had now little difficulty in getting himself proclaimed "full king" over all the island. The election, indeed, was not sanctioned by legislative authority; but this authority, always fluctuating and uncertain, was at present almost worthless. A more important opposition was that offered by the church, in whose ranks the Saxons were far more numerous than the Danes, or priests of Danish descent. Æthelnoth, the archbishop of Canterbury, who was a Saxon, refused to perform the ceremonies of the coronation. Taking the crown and sceptre, which it appears had been intrusted to his charge by Canute, he laid them on the altar, and said, "Harold, I will neither give them to thee, nor prevent thee from taking the ensigns of royalty; but I will not bless thee, nor shall any bishop consecrate thee on the throne." It is said that on this, like a modern conqueror, the Dane put the crown on his head with his own hands. His chief amusement was hunting; and, from the fleetness with which he could follow the game on foot, he acquired the name of Harold Harefoot. Little more is known about him, except that he died after a short reign of four years, in 1040, and was buried at Westminster.

HARTHACNUT
(From ancient coin)

Harthacnut, his half-brother, was at Bruges, and on the point of invading England, when Harold died. After long delays in Denmark he listened to the urgent calls of his exiled mother, the still stirring and ambitious Emma; and, leaving a greater force ready at the mouth of the Baltic, he sailed to Flanders with nine ships to consult his parent. He had been but a short time at Bruges when a deputation of English and Danish thanes arrived there to invite him to ascend in peace the most brilliant of his father's thrones. The two great factions in England had come to this agreement, but according to the chroniclers they were soon made to repent of it by the exactions and rapacity of Harthacnut. Relying more on the Danes, among whom he had lived so long, than on the English, and being averse to part with the companions of his revels and drinking-bouts, he brought with him a great number of Danish chiefs and courtiers, and retained an expensive Danish army and navy. This obliged him to have frequent recourse to *Danegelds*, the arbitrary levying of which by his *huscarles*, or household troops, who were all Danes, caused frequent insurrections. The people of Worcester resisted the huscarles with arms in their hands, and slew two of the king's collectors. In revenge for this contempt that city was burned to the ground, a great part of the surrounding country laid desolate, and the goods of the citizens put to the spoil "by such power of lords and men-of-war as the king sent against them." Not even the church was exempted from these oppressive levies of Danegeld, for a monkish writer complains that the clergy were forced to sell the very chalices from the altar in order to pay their assessments.

On his first arriving in England, Harthacnut showed his revenge for the injury done by Harold to himself and his relatives in a truly barbarous manner. By his order the body of Harold was dug up from the grave, its head was struck off, and then both body and head were thrown into the Thames. Some of the old writers say that Godwin was obliged to assist at the disinterment

and decapitation of the corpse, the mutilated remains of which were soon after drawn out of the river by some Danish fishermen, who secretly interred them in the churchyard of St. Clement Danes. Earl Godwin, indeed, a very short time after, was formally accused of Ælfred's murder, but he cleared himself in law by his own oath and the oaths of many of his peers, and a rich and splendid present is generally supposed to have set the question at rest between him and Harthacnut, though it failed to quit him in popular opinion. This present was a ship of the first class, covered with gilded metal, and bearing a figurehead in solid gold; the crew, which formed an intrinsic part of the gift, were fourscore picked warriors, and each warrior was furnished with dress and appointments of the most costly description—a gilded helmet was on his head, a triple hauberk on his body, a sword with a hilt of gold hung by his side, a Danish battle-axe, damasked with silver, was on his shoulder, a gold-studded shield on his left arm, and in his right hand a gilded *ategar*.

During the remainder of Harthacnut's short reign, Earl Godwin and Emma, the queen-mother, who were again in friendly alliance, divided nearly all the authority of government between them, leaving the king to the tranquil enjoyment of the things he most prized in life—his banquets, which were spread four times a day, and his carousals at night. From many incidental passages in the old writers we should conclude that the Saxons themselves were sufficiently addicted to drinking and the pleasures of the table, and required no instructors in those particulars; yet it is pretty generally stated that hard drinking became fashionable under the Danes, and more than one chronicler laments that Englishmen learned from the example of Harthacnut "their excessive gormandising and unmeasurable filling of their bellies with meats and drinks."

This king's death was in keeping with the tenor of his life. When he had reigned two years all but ten days, he took part, with his usual zest, in the marriage feast of one of his Danish thanes, which was held at Clapham. At a late hour of the night, as he stood up to pledge that jovial company, he suddenly fell down speechless, with the wine-cup in his hand: he was removed to an inner chamber, but he spoke no more; and thus the last Danish king in England died drunk. He was buried in the church of Winchester, near his father Canute.

THE ACCESSION OF EDWARD THE CONFESSOR: POWER OF EARL GODWIN

Harthacnut was scarcely in his grave when his half brother Edward, who was many years his senior, ascended the throne (1042) with no opposition, except such as he found from his own fears and scruples, which, had he been left to himself, would probably have induced him to prefer a monastery, or some other quiet retirement in Normandy. During his very brief reign, Harthacnut had recalled the exile to England, had received him with honour and affection, granted him a handsome allowance, and even proposed, it is said, to associate him in his government. Edward was, therefore, at hand, and in a favourable position at the moment of crisis; nor, according to the modern laws of hereditary succession, could anyone have established so good a right; for his half-nephew Edward, who was still far away in Hungary, was only illegitimately descended from the royal line of Cerdic and Alfred—his father, Eadmund Ironside, though older than Edward, being a natural son of their common father Æthelred. But, in truth, rules of succession had little to do with the settlement of the crown, which was affected by a variety of other and more potent

agencies. The connection between the Danish and English crowns was evidently breaking off; there was a prospect that the two parties in England would soon be left to decide their contest without any intervention from Denmark; and for some time the Saxon party had been gaining ground.

On their side, the Danes, having no descendant of the great Canute around whom to rally, became less vehement for the expulsion of the Saxon line, while many of them settled in the south of the island were won over by the reputed virtue and sanctity of Edward. If we may judge by the uncertain light of some of the chronicles, many leading Danes quitted England on Harthacnut's decease; and it seems quite certain that when the nobles and prelates of the Saxons assembled in London, with the resolution of electing Edward, they encountered no opposition from any Danish faction. But the great Earl Godwin, the still suspected murderer of the new king's brother Ælfred, had by far the greatest share in Edward's elevation. This veteran politician, of an age considered barbarous, and of a race (the Saxon) generally noted rather for stupidity and dulness than for acuteness and adroitness, trimmed his sails according to the winds that predominated, with a degree of skill which would stand a comparison with the manœuvres of the most celebrated political intriguers of the most modern times. In all the struggles that had taken place since the death of Canute, he had changed sides with astonishing facility and rapidity—going back more than once to the party he had deserted, then changing again, and always causing the faction he embraced to triumph just so long as he adhered to it, and no longer. Changes, ruinous to others, only brought him an accession of strength. At the death of Harthacnut he was earl of all Wessex and Kent; and by his alliances and intrigues he controlled nearly the whole of the southern and more Saxon part of England.

The parentage of the great earl is obscured by conflicting accounts of contemporary writers, but there is considerable evidence to point to the conclusion that his father's station in life was a lowly one. Some writers have accepted the tradition that he was a cowherd as proof that even in Saxon England it was possible for a man to rise from the humblest beginnings to a position of the greatest influence. According to this story while tending cattle for his father a well-to-do Sussex yeoman, he helped the Danish Earl Ulf to escape to his ships. For this he was rewarded by Canute, whose service he entered, and after whose accession he was created earl of Wessex. Other accounts of the earl's life make him the son of a Sussex thane, Wulfnoth, and a relative of the faithless Edric Streona. But there is no question of his power at Edward's accession.[a] He was a fluent speaker; but his eloquence, no doubt, owed much of its faculty of conveying conviction to the power or material means he had always at hand to enforce his arguments. When he rose in the assembly of thanes and bishops, and gave it as his opinion that Edward should be their king, there were but very few dissentient voices; and the earl carefully marked the weak minority, who seem all to have been Saxons, and drove them into exile shortly after. It is pretty generally stated that his relation, William, duke of Normandy, afterwards the Conqueror, materially aided Edward by his influence, having firmly announced to the Saxons that if they failed in their duty to the sons of Emma they should feel the weight of his vengeance; but we more than doubt the authenticity of this fact, from the simple circumstances of Duke William's being only fifteen years old at the time, and his states being in most lamentable confusion and anarchy, pressed from without by the French king and troubled within by factious nobles, who all wished to take advantage of his youth and inexperience.

[1042-1043 A.D.]

Edward hated the man who was serving him; and while Godwin was placing him on the throne, he could not detach his eyes from the bloody grave to which, in his conviction, the earl had sent his brother Ælfred. Godwin was perfectly well aware of these feelings, and, like a practised politician, before he stirred in Edward's cause, and when the fate of that prince, even to his life or death, was in his hands, he made such stipulations as were best calculated to secure him against their effects. He obtained an extension of territories, honours, and commands for himself and his sons; a solemn assurance that the past was forgiven; and, as a pledge for future affection and family union, he made Edward consent to marry his daughter. The fair Eadgyth (Edith), the daughter of the fortunate earl, became queen of England; but the heart was not to be controlled, and Edward was never a husband to her. Yet, from contemporary accounts, Eadgyth was deserving of love, and possessed of such a union of good qualities as ought to have removed the deep-rooted antipathies of the king to herself and her race. Her person was beautiful; her manners graceful; her disposition cheerful, meek, pious, and generous, without a taint of her father's or brothers' pride and arrogance. Her mental accomplishments far surpassed the standard of that age; she was fond of reading, and had read many books.

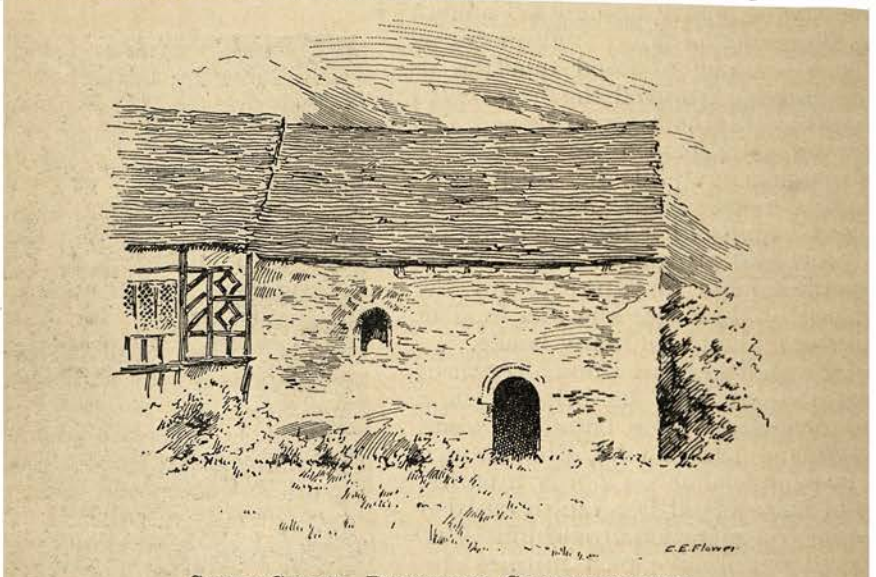
EDWARD THE CONFESSOR

If Edward neglected and afterwards persecuted his wife, he behaved in a still harsher and more summary manner to his mother Emma, who, though she has few claims on our sympathy, was, in spite of all her faults, entitled to some consideration from him. But he could not forgive past injuries; he could not forget that, while she lavished her affections and ill-gotten treasures on her children by Canute, she had left him and his brother to languish in poverty in Normandy, where they were forced to eat the bitter bread of other people; and he seems never to have relieved her from the horrid suspicion of having had part in Ælfred's murder. These feelings were probably exasperated by her refusing to advance him money at a moment of need, just before or at the date of his coronation. Shortly after his coronation he held a council at Gloucester, whence, accompanied by earls Godwin, Leofric, and Siward, he hurried to Winchester, where Emma had again established a sort of court, seized her treasures, and all the cattle, the corn, and the forage on the lands which she possessed as a dower, and behaved otherwise to her with great harshness. Some say she was committed to close custody in the abbey of Wearwell; but, according to the more generally received account, she was permitted to retain her lands, and to reside at large at Winchester, where, it appears, she died in 1052, the tenth year of Edward's reign.

In the second year of Edward's reign (1043) a faint demonstration to

re-establish the Scandinavian supremacy in England was made by Magnus, king of Norway and Denmark; but the Saxons assembled a great fleet at Sandwich; the Danes in the land remained quiet; and, his last hopes expiring, Magnus was soon induced to declare that he thought it "right and most convenient" that he should let Edward enjoy his crown, and content himself with the kingdoms which God had given him.

But, though undisturbed by foreign invasions or the internal wars of a competitor for the crown, Edward was little more than a king in name. This abject condition arose in part, but certainly not wholly, from his easy, pacific disposition; for he not unfrequently showed himself capable of energy, and firm and sudden decisions; and although superstitious and monk-ridden, he was, when roused, neither deficient in talent nor in moral courage. A wider



SAXON CHAPEL, DEERHURST, GLOUCESTERSHIRE
(Built by Earl Odda, early times of Edward the Confessor)

and deeper spring, that sapped the royal authority, was the enormous power of which Godwin and other earls had possessed themselves before his accession; and this power he himself was obliged to augment before he could put his foot on the lowest step of the throne. When he had kept his promises with the "great earl"—and he could not possibly evade them—what with the territories and commands of Godwin and of his six sons, Harold, Sweyn, Wulfnoth, Tostig, Gurth, and Leofwine, the whole of the south of England, from Lincolnshire to the end of Devonshire, was in the hands of one family. Nor had Edward's authority a better basis elsewhere, for the whole of the north was unequally divided between Leofric [of Mercia] and the greater Earl Siward, whose dominions extended from the Humber to the Scottish border. These earls possessed all that was valuable in sovereignty within the territories they held. They appointed their own judges, received fines, and levied what troops they chose.

The chief security of the king lay in the clashing interests and jealousies of these mighty vassals. As the king endeared himself to his people by reducing taxation and removing the odious Danegeld altogether, by reviving

[1043 A.D.]

the old Saxon laws, and administering them with justice and promptitude—as he gained their reverence by his mild virtues, and still more by his ascetic devotion, which eventually caused his canonisation, he might have been enabled to curb the family of Godwin and the rest, and raise his depressed throne by means of the popular will and affection; but unfortunately there were circumstances interwoven which neutralised Edward's advantages, and gave the favourable colour of nationality and patriotism to the cause of Godwin whenever he chose to quarrel with the king.

GROWTH OF NORMAN INFLUENCE

It was perfectly natural that Edward should have an affection for the Normans, among whom the best years of his life had been passed and who had given him food and shelter when he was abandoned by all the rest of the world. He was only thirteen years old when he was first sent into Normandy; he was somewhat past forty when he ascended the English throne; so that for twenty-seven years he had been accustomed to foreign manners and habits, and to convey all his thoughts and feelings through the medium of a foreign language. He was accused of a predilection for the French or "Romance," which by this time had superseded their Scandinavian dialect, and become the vernacular language of the Normans; but it is more than probable he had forgotten his Saxon. Relying on Edward's gratitude and friendship, several Normans came over with him when he was invited to England by Harthacnut; this number was augmented after his accession to the throne; and as the king provided for them all, or gave them constant entertainment at his court, fresh adventurers continued to cross the Channel.

It was chiefly in the church that Edward provided for his foreign favourites. Robert of Jumièges, a Norman, and, like most of his race, a personal enemy to Earl Godwin, was promoted to be archbishop of Canterbury and primate of all England; and crosiers and abbots' staffs were liberally distributed to the king's exotic chaplains and house clerks, who are said to have closed all the avenues of access to his person and favour against the English-born. Those Saxon nobles, who yet hoped to prosper at court, learned to speak French, and imitated the dress, fashions, and manner of living of the Normans. Edward adopted, in all documents and charters, the handwriting of the Normans, which he thought handsomer than that of the English; he introduced the use of the "great seal," which he appended to his parchments, in addition to the simple mark of the cross, which had been used by the Anglo-Saxon kings; and as his chancellor, secretaries of state, and legal advisers were all foreigners, the English lawyers were obliged to study French, and to employ a foreign language in their deeds and papers. The study of the French language, to the neglect of the Saxon, became very general; and the rich, the young, and the gay of both sexes were not satisfied unless their tunics, their *chaussés*, their streamers, and mufflers were cut after the latest Norman pattern. Not one of these things was trifling in its influence—united, their effect must have been most important as a prelude to the great drama of the Norman conquest.

All this, however, was distasteful to the great body of the Saxon people, and highly irritating to Earl Godwin, who is said to have exacted an express and solemn promise from the king not to inundate the land with Normans, ere he consented to raise him to the throne. The earl could scarcely take up a more popular ground; and he made his more private wrongs—the king's treatment of his daughter, and disinclination to the society of himself and

his sons—all close and revolve round this centre. Even personally the sympathy of the people went with him. "Is it astonishing," they said, "that the author and supporter of Edward's reign should be wroth to see new men, of a foreign nation, preferred to himself?"

But in 1051 an event occurred which exasperated the whole nation against the Normans, and gave Godwin the opportunity of recovering all his reputation and influence with the Saxon people. Among the many foreigners that came over to visit the king was Eustace, count of Boulogne, who had married the lady Goda, a daughter of Æthelred, and sister to Edward. This loving brother-in-law, with rather a numerous retinue of warriors and men-at-arms, was hospitably entertained at the court of Edward, where he saw Frenchmen, and Normans, and everything that was French and foreign so completely in the ascendant that he was led to despise the Saxons as a people already conquered. On his return homewards Eustace slept one night at Canterbury. The next morning he continued his route for Dover, and when he was within a mile of that town he ordered a halt, left his travelling palfrey, and mounted his war-horse, which a page led in his right hand. He also put on his coat of mail; all his people did the same; and in this warlike harness they entered Dover. The foreigners marched insolently through the town, choosing the best houses in which to pass the night, and taking free quarters on the citizens without asking permission, which was contrary to the laws and customs of the Saxons. One of the townsmen boldly repelled from his threshold a retainer who pretended to take up his quarters in his house. The stranger drew his sword and wounded the Englishman; the Englishman armed in haste, and he, or one of his house, slew the Frenchman. At this intelligence, Count Eustace and all his troop mounted on horseback, and, surrounding the house of the Englishman, some of them forced their way in, and murdered him on his own hearth-stone. This done, they galloped through the streets with their naked swords in their hands, striking men and women, and crushing several children under their horses' hoofs.

This outrage roused the spirit of the burghers, who armed themselves with such weapons as they had and met the mailed warriors in a mass. After a fierce conflict, in which nineteen of the foreigners were slain and many more wounded, Eustace, with the rest, being unable to reach the port and embark, retreated out of Dover, and then galloped with loose rein towards Gloucester, to lay his complaints before the king. Edward, who was, as usual, surrounded by his Norman favourites, gave his peace to Eustace and his companions; and believing, on the simple assertion of his brother-in-law, that the inhabitants of Dover were in the wrong and had begun the affray, he sent immediately to Earl Godwin, in whose government the city lay. "Set out forthwith," said the king's order; "go and chastise with a military execution those who attack my relations with the sword, and trouble the peace of the country." "It ill becomes you," replied Godwin, "to condemn, without a hearing, the men whom it is your duty to protect." The circumstances of the fight at Dover were now known all over the country; the assault evidently had begun by a Frenchman's daring to violate the sanctity of an Englishman's house, and, right or wrong, the Saxon people would naturally espouse the cause of their countrymen. Instead, therefore, of chastising the burghers, the earl sided with them. Before proceeding to extremities, Godwin proposed that the magistrates of Dover should be cited in a legal manner to appear before the king and the royal judges, to give an account of their conduct. Edward would not listen to this just and reasonable proposition, but summoned Godwin to appear before his court at Gloucester; and, on his hesitating to put

[1051 A.D.]

himself in so much jeopardy, threatened him and his family with banishment and confiscation. Then the great earl armed; and though some of the chroniclers assert it was only to redress the popular grievances, and to make an appeal to the English against the courtiers from beyond sea, and that nothing was farther from his thoughts than to offer insult or violence to the king of his own creation, we are far from being convinced of the entire purity of his motives or the moderation of his objects.

REVOLT AND FALL OF GODWIN

Godwin, who ruled the country south of the Thames, from one end to the other, gathered his forces together, and was joined by a large body of the people, who voluntarily took up arms. Harold, the eldest of his sons, collected many men all along the eastern coast between the Thames and the Wash; and Sweyn, his second son, arrayed his soldiers, and formed a patriotic association among the Saxons who dwelt on the banks of the Severn and along the frontiers of Wales. These three columns soon concentrated near Gloucester, then the royal residence; and, with means adequate to enforce his wish, Godwin demanded that the Count Eustace, his companions, and many other Normans and Frenchmen, should be given up to the justice of the nation. Edward, knowing he was wholly at the mercy of his irritated father-in-law, was still firm. To gain time he opened a negotiation; and so much was he still esteemed by the people that Godwin was obliged to save appearances, and to grant him that delay which, for a while, wholly overcast the earl's fortunes. Edward had secured the good-will of Godwin's great rivals—Siward, earl of Northumbria, and Leofric, earl of Mercia: to these chiefs he now applied for protection.

When these forces united and marched to the king's rescue, they were equal or superior in number to those of Godwin, who had thus lost his moment. The people, however, had improved in wisdom; and, on the two armies coming in front of each other, it was presently seen, by their respective leaders, that old animosities had in a great measure died away—that the Anglo-Danes from the north were by no means anxious to engage their brethren of the south for the cause of Normans, men equally alien to them both, and that the Saxons of the south were averse to shedding the blood of the Anglo-Danes of the north. An armistice was concluded between the king and Godwin, and it was agreed to refer all differences to an assembly to be held at London in the following autumn. Hostages and oaths were exchanged—both king and earl swearing "God's peace and full friendship" for one another. Edward employed the interval between the armistice and the meeting of the witenagemot in publishing a ban for the levying of a royal army all over the kingdom, in engaging troops, both foreign and domestic, and in strengthening himself by all the means he could command. In the same time the forces of Harold, which consisted in chief part of burghers and yeomen, who had armed under the first excitement of a popular quarrel, and who had neither pay nor quarters in the field, dwindled rapidly away. According to the *Saxon Chronicle*,[s] the king's army, which was cantoned within and about London, soon became the most numerous that had been seen in this reign. The chief and many of the subordinate commands in it were given to Norman favourites, who thirsted for the blood of Earl Godwin. At the appointed time the earl and his sons were summoned to appear before the witenagemot, without any military escort whatsoever.

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Godwin, who before now had frequently both suffered and practised treachery, refused to attend the assembly unless proper securities were given that he and his sons should go thither and depart thence in safety. This reasonable demand was repeated, and twice refused; and then Edward and the great council pronounced a sentence of banishment, decreeing that the earl and all his family should quit the land forever within five days. There was no appeal; and Godwin and his sons, who, it appears, had marched to Southwark, on finding that even the small force they had brought with them was thinned by hourly desertion, fled by night for their lives. The sudden fall of this great family confounded and stupefied the popular mind. "Wonderful would it have been thought," says the *Saxon Chronicle*,[s] "if anyone had said before that matters would come to such a pass." Before the expiration of the five days' grace a troop of horsemen was sent to pursue and seize the earl and his family; but these soldiers were wholly or chiefly Saxons, and either could not or would not overtake them. Godwin, with his wife and his three sons, Sweyn, Tostig, and Gurth, embarked on the east coast, and sailed to Flanders, where he was well received by Earl Baldwin; Harold and his brother Leofwine crossed the sea to Ireland. Their broad lands and houses, with everything upon them and within them, were confiscated; their governments and honours distributed, in part among foreigners; and scarcely a trace was left in the country of the warlike earl or his bold sons. But a fair daughter of that house remained; Eadgyth was still queen of England, and on her Edward determined to pour out the last vial of his wrath, and complete his vengeance on the obnoxious race that had given him the throne. He seized her dower, he took from her her jewels and her money, "even to the uttermost farthing," and allowing her only the attendance of one maiden, he closely confined his virgin wife in the monastery of Wearwell, of which one of his sisters was lady abbess; and in this cheerless captivity she, in the language of one of the old chroniclers, "in tears and prayers expected the day of her release and comfort."

Delivered from the awe and timidity he had always felt in Earl Godwin's presence, the king now put no restraint on his affection for the Normans, who flocked over in greater shoals than ever to make their fortunes in England. A few months after Godwin's exile he expressed his anxious desire to have William, duke of Normandy, for his guest; and that ambitious and most crafty prince, who already began to entertain projects on England, readily accepted the invitation, and came over with a numerous retinue, in the fixed purpose of turning the visit to the best account by personally informing himself of the strength and condition of the country, and by influencing the councils of the king, who had no children to succeed him, and was said to be labouring under a vow of perpetual chastity, even as if he had been a cloistered monk.[b]

ROLLO

Among the most formidable of the sea-kings in the beginning of the tenth century was Rollo, who, from his activity, had acquired the surname of the Ganger. The north of France was the theatre of his exploits; and the mari-

[1027 A.D.]

time provinces which had already been ravaged by Hasting were laid desolate by the repeated invasions of this restless barbarian.[o] He tracked the course of his ruthless precursors. He defeated the French armies, besieged Paris for four years, took Bayeux and Evreux, and attacked Paris again.

At length, all hope of expelling him by force having expired, it was suggested by the counsellors of Charles the Simple to propose to him the cession of a country for himself and his companions, in full property and sovereignty, yielding only feudal homage to the crown of France. Rollo, after some hesitation, with the consent of the chieftains, acquiesced in the proposition; and that extensive district from the Epte to the sea, which was afterwards called Normandy, was ceded to his power, with the title of Duke and the hand of the fair Gisela, the French king's daughter. The pacification arranged, the ceremony of the homage only remained. It was necessary to kneel, and kiss the king's foot; and this the proud pagan disdained. The prelate who attended the king declared that a gift so magnificent deserved his compliance. "I will never," exclaimed Rollo, "bend my knees to the knees of any man, nor kiss any man's foot." Unfortunately, this was the ancient mode of feudal homage, and could not be dispensed with. The Frankish nobles solicited him in vain. At last, as a substitute, he ordered one of his knights to do the ceremony for him. The knight, revolting, like his master, at the degradation, murmured, and obeyed; but, instead of kneeling, he seized the royal foot, standing upright, and, carrying it suddenly to his mouth, threw the king on the floor—a contumelious indignity, which, on such an occasion, a haughty savage only could have offered, and only a defeated prince have endured.[n]

Rollo left his dominions to his posterity, a race of able and fortunate princes. The necessity of cultivating a desert introduced habits of industry and subordination among the colonists. Their numbers were repeatedly multiplied by the accession of new adventurers; and that spirit of enterprise and contempt of danger which had distinguished their fathers in the pursuit of plunder soon enabled them to reach and even to outstrip their neighbours in the career of civilisation. Within less than one hundred and fifty years from the baptism of Rollo, the Normans were ranked among the most polished as well as the most warlike nations of Europe.[o]

WILLIAM OF NORMANDY

William was the natural son of Robert II, duke of Normandy—the fifth in succession from Rollo, and the son of Duke Richard II. Richard II was a brother to Queen Emma, who was the mother by Æthelred of King Edward and of the murdered Ælfred, as also by her second husband, Canute the Great, of the preceding king, Harthacnut. On the mother's side William's descent was sufficiently obscure. One day, as the Duke Robert was returning from the chase, he met a fair girl, who, with companions of her own age, was washing clothes in a brook. Struck by her surpassing beauty, he sent one of his discreetest knights to make proposals to her family. Such a mode of proceeding is startling enough in our days, but in that age of barbarism and the license of power the wonder is he did not seize the lowly maiden by force, without treaty or negotiation. The father of the maiden, who was a currier or tanner, of the town of Falaise, at first received the proposals of Robert's love-ambassador with indignation; but on second thought he went to consult one of his brothers, a hermit in a neighbouring forest; and this religious man gave it as his opinion that one ought, in all things, to conform to

the will of the powerful man. The name of the maid of Falaise was Arlete, Harlotta, or Herleva—for she is indiscriminately called by these different appellations, which all seem to come from the old Norman or Danish compound, *Her-leve*, "the much-loved." And the duke continued to love her dearly; and he brought up the boy William, he had by her, with as much care and honour as if he had been the son of a lawful spouse.

When William was only seven years old, his father, Duke Robert, resolved to go to Jerusalem as a pilgrim, to obtain the remission of his sins. The Norman chiefs, anxious to retain him among them, represented that it would be a bad thing for them to be left without a head. The native chroniclers put the following naïve reply into the mouth of Duke Robert: "By my faith, sirs, I will not leave you without a seigneur. I have a little bastard, who will grow big, if it please God! Choose him from this moment, and, before you all, I will put him in possession of this duchy as my successor." The Normans did what Duke Robert proposed, "because," says the chronicle, "it suited them so to do." According to the feudal practice they one by one placed their hands within his hands, and swore fidelity to the child. Robert had a presentiment that he would not return; and he never did: he died about a year after (1034), on his road home. He had scarcely donned his pilgrim's weeds and departed from Normandy when several relations of the old duke protested against the election of William, alleging that a bastard was not worthy of commanding the children of the Scandinavians. A civil war ensued, in which the party of William was decidedly victorious.

As the boy advanced in years he showed an indomitable spirit and a wonderful aptitude in learning those knightly and warlike exercises which then constituted the principal part of education. This endeared him to his partisans; and the important day on which he first put on armour, and mounted his battle-steed without the aid of stirrup, was held as a festal day in Normandy. Occasions were not wanting for the practice of war and battles, but were, on the contrary, frequently presented both by his own turbulent subjects and his ambitious neighbours. From his tender youth upwards, William was habituated to warfare and bloodshed, and to the exercise of policy and craft, by which he often succeeded when force and arms failed. His disposition was revengeful and pitiless in the extreme. At an after period of life, when he had imposed respect or dread upon the world, he scorned the distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate birth, and more than once bravingly put "We, William the Bastard," to his charters and declarations; but at the commencement of his career he was exceedingly susceptible and sore on this point, and often took sanguinary vengeance on those who scoffed at the stain of his birth.

The fame of William's doings had long preceded him to England, where they created very different emotions, according to men's dispositions and interests. But when he himself arrived in England, with a numerous and splendid train, it is said that the duke of Normandy might have doubted, from the evidence of his senses, whether he had quitted his own country. Normans commanded the Saxon fleet he met at Dover, Normans garrisoned the castle and a fortress on a hill at Canterbury; and as he advanced on the journey Norman knights, bishops, abbots, and burghers met him at every relay to bid him welcome. At the court of Edward, in the midst of Norman clerks, priests, and nobles, who looked up to him as their "natural lord," he was more a king than the king himself; and every day he spent in England must have conveyed additional conviction of the extent of Norman influence, and of the weakness and disorganisation of the country.

It is recorded by the old writers that King Edward gave a most affectionate welcome to his good cousin Duke William, that he lived lovingly with him while he was here, and that at his departure he gave him a most royal gift of arms, horses, hounds, and hawks. But what passed in the private and confidential intercourse of the two princes these writers knew not, and attempted not to divine; and the only evident fact is that, after William's visit, the Normans in England carried their assumption of superiority still higher than before.

THE RETURN OF GODWIN

But preparations were in progress for the interrupting of this domination. Ever since his flight into Flanders, Godwin had been actively engaged in devising means for his triumphant return, and in corresponding with and keeping up the spirits of the Saxon party at home. In the following summer (1052) the great earl got together a number of ships, and, eluding the vigilance of the royal fleet, he fell upon the southern coast, where many Saxons gave him a hearty welcome. He had previously won over the Saxon garrison and the mariners of Hastings, and he now sent secret emissaries all over the country, at whose representations hosts of people took up arms, binding themselves by oath to the cause of the exiled chief, and "promising, all with one voice," says Roger of Hoveden,[1] "to live or die with Godwin."

Sailing along the Sussex coast to the Isle of Wight, he was met there by his sons Harold and Leofwine, who had brought over a considerable force in men and ships from Ireland. From the Isle of Wight the Saxon chiefs sailed to Sandwich, where they landed part of their forces without opposition, and then, with the rest, boldly doubled the North Foreland, and sailed up the Thames towards London. As they advanced, the popularity of their cause was manifestly displayed; the Saxon and Anglo-Danish troops of the king, and all the royal ships they met, went over to them; the burghers and peasants hastened to supply them with provisions, and to join the cry against the Normans. In this easy and triumphant manner did the exiles reach the suburb of Southwark, where they anchored, and landed without being obliged to draw a sword or bend a single bow. Their presence threw everything into confusion; and the court party soon saw that the citizens of London were as well affected to Godwin as the rest of the people had shown themselves. The earl sent a respectful message to the king, requesting for himself and family the revision of the irregular sentence of exile, the restoration of their former territories, honours, and employments; promising, on these conditions, a dutiful and entire submission.

Though he must have known the critical state of his affairs, Edward was firm or obstinate, and sternly refused the conditions. Godwin despatched other messengers, but they returned with an equally positive refusal, and then the old earl had the greatest difficulty in restraining his irritated partisans. But the game was in his hand, and his moderation and aversion to the spilling of kindred blood greatly strengthened his party. On the opposite side of the river a royal fleet of fifty sail was moored, and a considerable army was drawn up on the bank; but it was soon found there was no relying either on the mariners or the soldiers, who, for the most part, if not won over to the cause of Godwin, were averse to civil war. Still, while most of his party were trembling around him, and not a few seeking safety in flight or concealment, the king remained inflexible. The boldest of his Norman favourites, who

foresaw that peace between the Saxons would be their ruin, ventured to press him to give the signal for attack; but the now openly expressed sentiments of the royal troops, and the arguments of the priest Stigand and many of the Saxon nobles, finally induced Edward to yield, and give his reluctant consent to the opening of negotiations with his detested father-in-law. The foreign favourites fled in all directions, some taking refuge in the castles or fortresses commanded by their countrymen, and others making for the shores of the British Channel, where they lay concealed until favourable opportunities offered for passing over to the Continent.

In the mean time the witenagemot was summoned, and when Godwin, in plenitude of might, appeared before it, after having visited the humbled king, the "earls" and "all the best men of the land" agreed in the proposition that the Normans were guilty of the late dissensions, and Godwin and his sons innocent of the crimes of which they had been accused. With the exception of four or five obscure men, a sentence of outlawry was hurled against all the Normans and French; and, after he had given hostages to Edward, Godwin and his sons, with the exception only of Sweyn, received full restitution; and, as a completion of his triumph, his daughter Eadgyth was removed from her monastic prison to court, and restored to all her honours as queen. The hostages granted were Wulfnoth, the youngest son, and Hakon, a grandson of Godwin. Edward had no sooner got them into his hands than, for safer custody, he sent them over to his cousin, William of Normandy, and from this circumstance there arose a curious episode, or under-act, in the treacherous and sanguinary drama. The exclusion of Sweyn from pardon, and a nominal restoration to the king's friendship, did not arise from the active part he had taken in the Norman quarrel, but was based on his old crimes, and more particularly the treacherous murder of his cousin Beorn.

Godwin did not long survive the re-establishment of Saxon supremacy, and his complete victory over the king. According to Henry of Huntingdon,[e] and other chroniclers, a very short time after their feigned reconciliation, as Godwin sat at table with the king at Windsor, Edward again reproached the earl with his brother Ælfred's murder. "O king!" Godwin is made to say, "whence comes it that, at the least remembrance of your brother, you show me a bad countenance? If I have contributed, even indirectly, to his cruel fate, may the God of heaven cause this morsel of bread to choke me!" He put the bread to his mouth, and, according to this story, was choked, and died instantly. But it appears, from better authority, that Godwin's death was by no means so sudden and dramatic; that though he fell speechless from the king's table on Easter Monday, most probably from apoplexy, he was taken up and carried into an inner chamber by his two sons, Tostig and Gurth, and did not die till the following Thursday.

Harold, the eldest, the handsomest, the most accomplished, and in every respect the best of all the sons of Godwin, succeeded to his father's territories and command, and to even more than Godwin's authority in the nation; for, while the people equally considered him as the great champion of the Saxon cause, he was far less obnoxious than his father to the king; and whereas his father's iron frame was sinking under the weight of years, he was in the prime and vigour of life. The spirit of Edward, moreover, was subdued by misfortune, the fast-coming infirmities of age, and a still increasing devotion, that taught him all worldly dominion was a bauble not worth contending for. He was also conciliated by the permission to retain some of his foreign bishops, abbots, and clerks, and to recall a few other favourites from Normandy.

HAROLD, THE REAL RULER OF ENGLAND

The extent of Harold's power was soon made manifest. On succeeding to Godwin's earldom, he had vacated his own command of East Anglia, which was bestowed on Ælfgar (Algar), the son of Earl Leofric, the hereditary enemy of the house of Godwin, who had held it during Harold's disgrace and exile. As soon as he felt confident of his strength, Harold caused Ælfgar to be expelled his government and banished the land, upon an accusation of treason; and, however unjust the sentence may have been, it appears to have been passed with the sanction and concurrence of the witenagemot. Ælfgar, who had married a Welsh princess, the daughter of King Gruffydd, fled into Wales, whence, relying on the power and influence possessed by his father, the earl Leofric, and by his other family connections and allies, he shortly after issued with a considerable force, and fell upon the county and city of Hereford.

Harold soon hastened to the scene of action; and advancing from Gloucester with a well-appointed army defeated Ælfgar, and followed him in his retreat through the mountain defiles and across the moors and morasses of Wales. Ælfgar, however, still showed himself so powerful that Harold was obliged to treat with him. By these negotiations he was restored to his former possessions and honours; and when, very shortly after, his father Leofric died, Ælfgar was allowed to take possession of his vast earldoms. The king seems to have wished that Ælfgar should have been a counterpoise to Harold, as Leofric had once been to Godwin; but, both in council and camp, Harold carried everything before him, and his jealousy being again excited, he again drove Ælfgar into banishment. Ælfgar, indeed, was no mean rival. Both in boldness of character and in the nature of his adventures he bore some resemblance to Harold. This time he fled into Ireland, whence he soon returned with a small fleet and an army, chiefly raised among the Northmen who had settled on the Irish coasts. With this force, and the assistance of the Welsh under his father-in-law, King Gruffydd, he recovered his earldoms by force of arms, and held them in defiance of the decrees of the king, who, whatever were his secret wishes, was obliged openly to denounce these proceedings as illegal and treasonable. After enjoying this triumph little more than a year, Ælfgar died (1059), and left two sons, Morcar (Morkere) and Edwin (Eadwine), who divided between them part of his territories and commands.

While these events were in progress, other circumstances had occurred in the north of England which materially augmented the power of Harold. Siward, the great earl of Northumbria, another of Godwin's most formidable rivals, had died, after an expedition into Scotland, and as his elder son Osbern had been slain, and his younger son Waltheof was too young to succeed to his father's government, the extensive northern earldom was given to Tostig, the brother of Harold. Siward had proceeded to Scotland to assist in seating his relation, Prince Malcolm, the son of the late King Duncan, upon the throne of that country, which had been usurped by Duncan's murderer, Macbeth. It was in this enterprise, and before it was crowned with final success, that, as has just been mentioned, Osbern, the pride of his father's heart, was slain. He appears to have fallen in the first battle fought with Macbeth (1054), near the hill of Dunsinane.

Siward, who was a Dane, either by birth or near descent, was much beloved by the Northumbrians, who were themselves chiefly of Danish extraction. They called him Siward the Strong; and many years after his death they showed, with pride, a rock of solid granite which they pretended he had split

in two with a single blow of his battle-axe. To his successor, Tostig, the brother of Harold, they showed a strong dislike from the first, and this aversion was subsequently increased by acts of tyranny on the part of the new earl. In another direction the popularity of Harold was increased by a most successful campaign against the Welsh, who had inflamed the hatred of the Saxon people by their recent forays and cruel murders. Their great leader, King Gruffydd, had been weakened by the death of Earl Ælfgar, in 1059; and after some minor operations Harold was commissioned, in 1063, to carry extreme measures into effect against the ever-turbulent Welsh.

The great earl displayed his usual ability, bravery, and activity; and by skilfully combined movements, in which his brother Tostig and the Northumbrians acted in concert with him—by employing the fleet along the coast, by accoutring his troops with light helmets, targets, and breast-pieces made of leather instead of their usual heavy armour, in order that they might be the better able to follow the fleet-footed Welsh—he gained a succession of victories, and finally reduced the mountaineers to such despair that they decapitated their king, Gruffydd, and sent his bleeding head to Harold, as a peace-offering and token of submission. The two half-brothers of Gruffydd swore fealty and gave hostages to King Edward and Harold. They also engaged to pay the ancient tribute; and a law was passed that every Welshman found in arms to the east of Offa's Dyke should lose his right hand. From this memorable expedition, the good effects of which were felt in England, through the tranquillity of the Welsh, for many years after, Harold returned in a sort of a Roman triumph to the mild and peaceable Edward, to whom he presented the ghastly head of Gruffydd, together with the rostrum or beak of that king's chief war-ship.

The king's devotion still kept increasing with his years, and now, forgetful of his bodily infirmities, which, in all probability, would have caused his death on the road, and indifferent to the temporal good of his people, he expressed his intention of going in pilgrimage to Rome, asserting that he was bound thereto by a solemn vow. The witan objected that, as he had no children, his absence and death would expose the nation to the dangers of a disputed succession; and then the king, for the first time, turned his thoughts to his nephew and namesake, Eadward, the son of his half-brother, Eadmund Ironside. The long neglect of this prince of the old race of Cerdic and Ælfred shows but slight affection for that Saxon family; and, as the king had never expected any children of his own to succeed him, it seems to confirm the statement of those old writers who say he had all along intended to bequeath his crown to his cousin, William of Normandy. But at this moment Norman interest and influence were at a low ebb; be his wishes what they might, Edward durst not propose the succession of William; and, being pressed by the witan and his own eager desire of travelling to Rome, he sent an embassy to the German emperor, Henry III, whose relative the young prince had married, requesting he might be restored to the care of the English nation.

Eadward the Ætheling, or Eadward the Outlaw as he is more commonly called, obeyed the summons with alacrity, and soon arrived in London, with his wife Agatha and his three young children—Eadgar, Margaret, and Christina. The race of their old kings was still dear to the English: Eadmund Ironside was a national hero, inferior only to the great Ælfred; his gallantry, his bravery, his victories over the Danes were sung in popular songs, and still formed the subject of daily conversation among the people, who therefore received his son and grandchildren with the most hearty welcome and enthusiastic joy. But though King Edward had invited over his nephew with the

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professed intention of proclaiming him his heir to the crown, that prince was never admitted into his presence. This circumstance could not fail of creating great disgust; but this and all other sentiments in the popular mind were speedily absorbed by the deep and universal grief and despondence caused by Prince Eadward's death. He expired in London shortly after his arrival in that city, and was buried in the cathedral of St. Paul's. This sudden catastrophe, and the voluntary or constrained coyness of the king towards his nephew, awakened horrid suspicions of foul play. The more generally received opinion seems to have been that the prince was kept at a distance by the machinations and contrivances of the jealous Harold, and that that earl caused him to be poisoned, in order to remove what he considered the greatest obstacle to his own future plans.

In justice, however, the memory of Harold ought not to be loaded with a crime which possibly after all was never committed; for the prince might very well have died a natural death, although his demise tallied with the views and interests of Harold. There is no shadow of proof that Harold circumvented and then destroyed the prince. It is merely presumed that, because the earl gained most by his death, he caused him to be killed. But William of Normandy gained as much as Harold by the removal of the prince, and was, at the very least, as capable of extreme and treacherous measures. During his visit in England, the king may have promised the duke that he would never receive his nephew Eadward; and while this circumstance would of itself account for the king's shyness, the coming of the prince would excite the jealousy and alarm of William, who had emissaries in the land and friends and partisans about the court. Supposing, therefore, Prince Eadward to have been murdered (and there is no proof that he was), the crime was as likely to have been committed by the orders of the duke as by those of the earl.

The demise of Eadward the Outlaw certainly cut off the national hope of a continuance of the old Saxon dynasty; for though he left a son, called Eadgar the Ætheling, that prince was very young. Had he been the most promising of youths, it is very doubtful whether a minor would not have been crushed by one or other of two such bold and skilful competitors as William and Harold. As matters stood, the king, whose journey to Rome could be no more talked of, turned his eyes to Normandy, while many of the Saxons began to look up to Harold, the brother of the queen, as the best and most national successor to the throne.

THE OATH OF HAROLD

That Harold went to Normandy at this time is certain; but it is said that his sole object in going was to obtain the release of his brother Wulfnoth and his nephew Hakon, the two hostages for the Godwin family, whom Edward had committed to the custody of Duke William, but whom he was now willing to restore. Another opinion is that Harold's going at all was wholly accidental. According to this version, being one day at his manor of Bosenham, or Bosham, on the Sussex coast, he went into a fishing-boat for recreation, with but few attendants, and those not very expert mariners; and scarcely was he launched into the deep, when a violent storm suddenly arose and drove the ill-managed boat upon the opposite coast of France; but whether he went by accident or design, or whatever were the motives of the voyage, the following facts seem to be pretty generally admitted:

Harold was wrecked or stranded near the mouth of the river Somme, in the territory of Guy, count of Ponthieu, who, according to a barbarous practice,

held as good law in the Middle Ages, seized the wreck as his right, and made the passengers his prisoners until they should pay a heavy ransom for their release. Harold made his condition known to Duke William, and entreated his good offices. The duke could not be blind to the advantages that might be derived from this accident, and he instantly and earnestly demanded that Harold should be released and sent to his court. William at first employed threats, without talking of ransom. The count of Ponthieu, who knew the rank of his captive, was deaf to these menaces, and only yielded on the offer of a large sum of money. Harold then went to Rouen; and the bastard of Normandy had the gratification of having in his court, and in his power, and bound to him by this recent obligation, the son of the great enemy of the Normans, one of the chiefs of the league that had banished from England the foreign courtiers—the intriguers in his favour for the royalty of that kingdom.

Although received with much magnificence, and treated with great respect and even a semblance of affection, Harold soon perceived he was in a more dangerous prison at Rouen than he had been in the castle of Guy. If he was uninformed as yet as to William's intentions, that happy ignorance was soon removed, and the whole peril of his present situation placed full before him by the duke, who said to him one day, as they were riding side by side: "When Edward and I lived together, like brothers, under the same roof, he promised me that, if ever he became king of England, he would make me his successor. Harold, I would, right well, that you helped me in the fulfilment of this promise; and be assured that if I obtain the kingdom by your aid, whatever you choose to ask shall be granted on the instant." The liberty and life of the earl were in the hands of the proposer, and so Harold promised to do what he could. William was not to be satisfied with vague promises. "Since you consent to serve me," he continued, "you must engage to fortify Dover Castle, to dig a well of good water there, and to give it up to my men-at-arms; you must also give me your sister, that I may marry her to one of my chiefs; and you yourself must marry my daughter Adele. Moreover, I wish you, at your departure, to leave me, in pledge of your promises, one of the hostages whose liberty you now reclaim; he will stay under my guard, and I will restore him to you in England when I arrive there as king." Harold felt that to refuse or object would be only to expose himself to ruin; and the champion of the Saxon cause, hiding his heart's abhorrence, pledged himself verbally to deliver the principal fortress of his country to the Normans, and to fulfil all the other engagements, which were as much forced upon him as though William had held the knife to his defenceless throat. But the ambitious, crafty, and suspicious Norman was not yet satisfied.

In the town of Avranches, or, according to other authorities, in the town of Bayeux, William summoned a grand council of the barons of Normandy, to be witnesses to the oaths he should exact from the English earl. The sanctity of an oath was so frequently disregarded in these devout ages that men had begun to consider it not enough to swear by the majesty of heaven and the hopes of eternal salvation; and had invented sundry plans, such as swearing upon the host or consecrated wafer and upon the relics of saints and martyrs, which, in their dull conception, were things far more awful and binding.

But William determined to gain this additional guarantee by a trick. On the eve of the day fixed for the assembly, he caused all the bones and relics of saints preserved in all the churches and monasteries in the country to be collected and deposited in a large tub, which was placed in the council-chamber,

and covered and concealed under a cloth of gold. At the appointed meeting, when William was seated on his chair of state, with a rich sword in his hand, a golden diadem on his head, and all his Norman chieftains round about him, the missal was brought in, and being opened at the evangelists was laid upon the cloth of gold which covered the tub, and gave it the appearance of a rich table or altar. Then Duke William rose and said: "Earl Harold, I require you, before this noble assembly, to confirm by oath the promises you have made me—to wit, to assist me in obtaining the kingdom of England after King Edward's death, to marry my daughter Adele, and to send me your sister, that I may give her in marriage to one of mine." Harold, who, it is said, was thus publicly taken by surprise, durst not retract; he stepped forward with a troubled and confused air, laid his hand upon the book, and swore. As soon as the oath was taken, at a signal from the duke the missal was removed, the cloth of gold was taken off, and the large tub was discovered, filled to the very brim with dead men's bones and dried-up bodies of saints, over which the son of Godwin had sworn without knowing it. According to the Norman chroniclers, Harold shuddered at the sight. Having, in his apprehension, thus made surety doubly sure, William loaded Harold with presents and permitted him to depart. Liberty was restored to young Hakon, who returned to England with his uncle, but the politic duke retained the other hostage, Wulfnoth, as a further security for the faith of his brother the earl.[b]

There is so much contradiction and conflict of statement in the several stories of Harold's oath, all of which come to us from Norman writers desirous of bolstering up the claims of the Conqueror, that it is impossible to get at the exact truth. Freeman says: "The tale is altogether impossible: but it is very likely that Harold was shipwrecked on the shore of Ponthieu and imprisoned by its count, Guy; that he was released by the interference of Duke William; that, in return for this favour, Harold helped him in his war with the Bretons; that he promised to marry his daughter, and that he did an act of formal homage to his intended father-in-law and temporary military commander. Here is most likely the germ of the story, a story about which the contemporary English writers are significantly silent, while the Normans improved it into such forms as suited their own purposes."[a]

EDWARD'S LAST YEARS

Harold had scarcely set foot in England when he was called to the field by circumstances which, for the present, gave him an opportunity of showing his justice and impartiality, or his wise policy, but which soon afterwards tended to complicate the difficulties of his situation. His brother Tostig, who had been intrusted with the government of Northumbria on good Siward's death, behaved with so much rapacity, tyranny, and cruelty as to provoke a general rising against his authority and person. Tostig fled; his treasury and armory were pillaged, and two hundred of his bodyguard were massacred on the banks of the Ouse.

The Northumbrians then determined to choose an earl for themselves; and their choice fell on Morcar, one of the sons of Earl Ælfgar, the old enemy of Harold and his family. Morcar, whose power and influence were extensive in Lincoln, Nottingham, and Derbyshire, readily accepted the authority offered him, and gathering together an armed host, and securing the services of a body of Welsh auxiliaries, he not only took possession of the great northern earldom, but advanced to Northampton, with an evident intention of extending

his power towards the south of England; but here he was met by the active and intrepid Harold, who had never yet returned vanquished from a field of battle. Before drawing the sword against his own countrymen, the son of Godwin proposed a conference. The Northumbrians, at the meeting, exposed the wrongs they had suffered from Tostig, and the motives of their insurrection. Harold endeavoured to palliate the faults of his brother, and promised better conduct for the future, if they would receive him back as their earl. But the Northumbrians unanimously protested against any reconciliation with the chief who had tyrannised over them. "We were born free men," said they, "and were brought up in freedom; a proud chief is to us unbearable—for we have learned from our ancestors to live free, or die."

The crimes of Tostig were proved, and Harold, giving up his brother's cause as lost, agreed to the demands of the Northumbrians that the appointment of Morcar as earl should be confirmed. A truce being concluded, he hastened to obtain the consent of the king, which was little more than a matter of form, and granted immediately. The Northumbrians than withdrew with their new earl, Morcar, from Northampton. As for the expelled Tostig, he fled to the court of Baldwin of Flanders, whose daughter he had married, and, burning with rage and revenge, and considering himself betrayed or unjustly abandoned by his brother Harold, he opened a correspondence and sought friendship and support with William of Normandy.

The childless and now childish Edward was dying. Harold arrived in London on the last day of November; the king grew worse and worse; and in the first days of January it was evident that the hand of death was upon him. The veil of mystery and doubt again thickens round the royal deathbed. The Norman writers positively affirm that Edward named William his successor, and that when Harold and his kinsmen forced their way into his chamber to obtain a different decision, he said to them with his dying voice, "Ye know right well, my lords, that I have bequeathed my kingdom to the duke of Normandy; and are there not those here who have plighted oaths to secure William's succession?" On the other side it is maintained, with equal confidence, that he named Harold his successor, and told the chiefs and churchmen that no one was so worthy of the crown as the great son of Godwin.

The Norman duke, whose best right was the sword of conquest, always insisted on the intentions and last will of Edward. But, although the will of a popular king was occasionally allowed much weight in the decision, it was not imperative or binding to the Saxon people without the consent and concurrence of the witenagemot—the parliament or great council of the nation—to which source of right the Norman, very naturally, never thought of applying. The English crown was in great measure an elective crown. As the royal race ended in Edward, or only survived in a boy, it became imperative to look elsewhere for a successor: and upon whom could the eyes of the nation so naturally fall as upon the experienced, skilful, and brave Harold, the defender of the Saxon cause and the near relation by marriage of their last king? Harold, therefore, derived his authority from what ought always to be considered its most legitimate source, and which was actually acknowledged to be so in the age and country in which he lived. William, a foreigner of an obnoxious race, rested his claim on Edward's dying declaration, and on a will that the king had no faculty to make or enforce without the consent and ratification of the states of the kingdom; and, strange to say, this will, which was held by some to give a plausible or even a just title (which it did not), was never produced, whence people concluded it had never existed.

[1065–1066 A.D.]

During these his last days, however, the anxious mind of the king was in good part absorbed by the care for his own sepulture, and his earnest wish that Westminster Abbey, which he had rebuilt from the foundation, should be completed and consecrated before he departed this life. The works, to which he had devoted a tenth part of his revenue, were pressed—they were finished; but on the festival of the Innocents, the day fixed for the consecration, he could not leave his chamber; and the grand ceremony was performed in presence of Queen Eadgyth, who represented her dying husband, and of a great concourse of nobles and priests, who had been bidden in unusual numbers to the Christmas festival, that they might partake in this solemn celebration. He expired on the 5th of January, 1066; and, on the very next day, the festival of the Epiphany, all that remained of the last Saxon king of the race of Cerdic and Ælfred was interred, with great pomp and solemnity, within the walls of the sacred edifice he had lived just long enough to complete. He was in his sixty-fifth or sixty-sixth year, and had reigned over England nearly twenty-four years.

The body of laws he compiled, which were so fondly remembered in after times when the Saxons were ground to the dust by Norman tyranny, were selected from the codes or collections of his predecessors, Æthelbert, Ine, and Ælfred, few or none of them originating in himself, although the gratitude of the nation long continued to attribute them all to him.[1] In his personal character pious, humane, and temperate, but infirm and easily persuaded, his whole life showed that he was better fitted to be a monk than a king.

THE ACCESSION OF HAROLD

Harold was proclaimed king in a vast assembly of the chiefs and nobles, and of the citizens of London, almost as soon as the body of Edward was deposited in the tomb, and the same evening witnessed his solemn coronation, only a few hours intervening between the two ceremonies.[b]

Of the lawfulness of Harold's succession, according to the English law of the time, there can be no doubt. He was nominated by the late king, regularly chosen, regularly consecrated. The witan had always exercised a free choice within the royal house, and the same principle would justify a choice beyond the royal house, when the royal house contained no qualified candidate. Minorities had been endured after the death of Eadred, and after the death of Eadgar. But then the only man in the land who held at all the same position as Harold now did was the churchman Dunstan. In fact the claims of Eadgar the Ætheling do not seem to have been put forward at the time. They begin to be heard of at a later time, when the notion of strict hereditary right was growing. When Harold is blamed at the time, it is not for disregarding the hereditary right of Eadgar but for breaking his own personal engagement to William. Whatever was the nature of that engagement, its breach was at most a ground of complaint against Harold personally; it could give William no claim as against the people of England. According to English law, William had no shadow of claim. The crown was not hereditary but

[1 Hallam says: "It became a favourite cry to demand the laws of Edward the Confessor; and the Normans themselves, as they grew dissatisfied with the royal administration, fell into these English sentiments. But what these laws were, or more properly, perhaps, these customs subsisting in the Confessor's age, was not very distinctly understood. In claiming the laws of Edward the Confessor, our ancestors meant but the redress of grievances, which tradition told them had not always existed."]

elective; and he was not elected to it. Nor had he even any hereditary claim; for he was not of the kingly stock of Cerdic. The alleged bequest of Edward was cancelled by the later bequest in favour of Harold. The whole question was a personal question between William and Harold. A single act of homage done by Harold to William when in William's military service could not bind Harold to refuse the crown which the nation offered him. William then had no claim to the crown on any showing, either of natural right or of English law.*i*

As for his oath, the strong mind of the Saxon, though not destitute of superstition, may have risen superior to the terrors of the dead men's bones, and the oaths that had been extorted from him most foully and by force in Normandy; but the circumstances, no doubt, made an unfavourable impression on the minds of such of his countrymen as were acquainted with them.

THE CORONATION OF KING HAROLD

Still, all the southern counties of England hailed his accession with joy; nor was he wanting himself in exertions to increase his well-established popularity. "He studied," says Holinshed,*t* "by all means which way to win the people's favour, and omitted no occasion whereby he might show any token of bounteous liberality, gentleness, and courteous behaviour towards them. The grievous customs, also, and taxes which his predecessors had raised, he either abolished or diminished; the ordinary wages of his servants and men-of-war he increased, and further showed himself very well bent to all virtue and goodness." Roger of Hoveden*l* adds that, from the moment of his accession, he showed himself pious, humble, and affable, and that he spared himself no fatigue, either by land or by sea, for the defence of his country.

The court was effectually cleared of the unpopular foreign favourites, but their property was respected; they were left in the enjoyment of their civil rights, and not a few retained their employments. Some of these Nor

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mans were the first to announce the death of Edward and the coronation of Harold to Duke William. At the moment when he received this great news William was in his hunting-grounds near Rouen. On a sudden he was observed to be very pensive; and giving his bow to one of his people, he threw himself into a skiff, crossed the river Seine, and then hurried on to his palace of Rouen, without saying a word to anyone. He stopped in the great hall, and strode up and down that apartment, now sitting down, now rising, changing his seat and his posture, as if unable to find rest in any. None of his attendants durst approach, he looked so fierce and agitated. Recovering from his reverie, William agreed that ambassadors should be immediately sent to England. When these envoys appeared before Harold, they said, "William, duke of the Normans, reminds thee of the oath thou hast sworn him with thy mouth, and with thy hand on good and holy relics." "It is true," replied the Saxon king, "that I made an oath to William, but I made it under the influence of force; I promised what did not belong to me, and engaged to do what I never could do; for my royalty does not belong to me, nor can I dispose of it without the consent of my country. In the like manner I cannot, without the consent of my country, espouse a foreign wife. As for my sister, whom the duke claims, in order that he may marry her to one of his chiefs, she has been dead some time—will he that I send him her corpse?" A second embassy terminated in mutual reproaches; and then William, swearing that, in the course of the year, he would come to exact all that was due to him, pressed those preparations for war which he had begun almost as soon as he learned the course events had taken in England.

WILLIAM'S PREPARATION FOR THE INVASION

On the Continent the opinion of most men was in favour of William, and Harold was regarded in the light of a sacrilegious oath-breaker, with whom no terms were to be kept. The habitual love of war, and the hopes of obtaining copious plunder and rich settlements in England, were not without their effect. In the cabinet council which the duke assembled, there was not one dissenting voice; all the great Norman lords were of opinion that the island ought to be invaded; and, knowing the magnitude of the enterprise, they engaged to serve him with their body and goods, even to the selling or mortgaging their inheritance. Some subscribed for ships, others to furnish men-at-arms, others engaged to march in person; the priests gave their gold and silver, the merchants their stuffs, and the farmers their corn and provender. A clerk stood near the duke, with a large book open before him; and as the vassals made their promises he wrote them all down in his register.

The ambitious William looked far beyond the confines of Normandy for soldiers of fortune to assist him in his enterprise. He had his ban of war published in all the neighbouring countries; he offered good pay to every tall, robust man who would serve him with a lance, the sword, or the cross-bow. A multitude flocked to him from all parts. They came from Maine and Anjou; from Poitou and Brittany; from the country of the French king and from Flanders; from Aquitaine and from Burgundy; from Piedmont beyond the Alps and from the banks of the Rhine. Adventurers by profession, the idle, the dissipated, the profligate, the *enfants perdus* of Europe hurried at the summons. Of these some were knights, others simple foot-soldiers; some demanded regular pay in money, others merely their passage across the Channel, and all the booty they might make. Some demanded

territory in England; while others, again, simply wished to secure some rich Saxon lady in marriage. All the wild wishes, all the pretensions of human avarice were wakened into activity. "William," says the *Norman Chronicle*, "repulsed no one; but promised and pleased all as much as he could." He even sold, beforehand, a bishopric in England to a certain Remi of Fescamp (afterwards canonised as St. Remigius), for a ship and twenty men-at-arms.

Three churchmen—the celebrated Lanfranc, Robert of Jumièges (archbishop of Canterbury, who had been expelled by Earl Godwin and his sons), and a deacon of Lisieux—had been sent on an embassy to Rome, where they urged the cause of William with entire success, and obtained from Alexander II a holy license to invade England—on the condition, however, that the Norman duke, when he had conquered the island, should hold it as a fief of the church. This measure was not carried through the consistory without opposition. The man who combated most warmly in its favour was the fiery Hildebrand then archdeacon of the church of Rome, and afterwards the celebrated Pope Gregory VII. The most valid reasons William or his ambassadors could present to the pope were the will of King Edward the Confessor, which was never produced, the perjury and sacrilege of Harold, the forcible expulsion from England of the Norman prelates, and the old massacre of the Danes on St. Brice's Day by King Æthelred. But if there was any want of plausibility in the argumentative statement of his case, William, as already intimated, was most liberal and convincing in his promises to the pope.

A papal bull was sent to the Norman duke; and, in order to give him still more confidence and security in his invasion, a consecrated banner and a ring of great price, containing one of the hairs of St. Peter, were added to the bull. William repaired in person to St. Germain, in order to solicit the aid of Philip I, king of the French, who refused any direct assistance; but permitted (what he probably could not prevent) many hundreds of his subjects to join the expedition. William's father-in-law, Baldwin of Flanders, gave some assistance in men, ships, and stores; and the other Continental princes pretty generally encouraged William, in the politic hope that a formidable neighbour might be kept at a distance for the rest of his life if the expedition succeeded, or so weakened as to be no longer formidable if it failed. From early spring all through the summer months the most active preparations had been carried on in all the seaports of Normandy. Workmen of all classes were employed in building and equipping ships; smiths and armourers forged lances, and made coats of mail; and porters passed incessantly to and fro, carrying the arms from the workshops to the ships. These notes of preparation soon sounded across the Channel, and gave warning of the coming invasion.

THE INVASION OF TOSTIG AND HAROLD HARDRADA

The first storm of war that burst upon England did not, however, proceed from Normandy, but from Harold's own unnatural brother. It will be remembered how this brother, Tostig, expelled from Northumbria, fled with treacherous intentions to the court of the earl of Flanders, and opened communications with the duke of Normandy. Soon after Harold's coronation Tostig repaired in person to Rouen, where he boasted to William that he had more credit and real power in England than his brother, and promised him the sure possession of that country, if he would only unite with him for its conquest. William was no doubt too well informed to credit this assertion; but he saw the advantage which might be derived from this fraternal hatred;

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and gave Tostig a few ships, with which that miscreant ravaged the Isle of Wight and the country about Sandwich. Retreating before the naval force of his brother, Tostig then went to the coast of Lincolnshire, where he did great harm. He next sailed up the Humber, but was presently driven thence by Morcar, earl of Northumbria, and his brother Edwin, now living in friendship with Harold, who had espoused their sister, Ealdgyth (Algitha), and made her queen of England. From the Humber, Tostig fled with only twelve small vessels to the north of Scotland, whence, forgetful of his alliance with the Norman duke, he sailed to the Baltic, to invite Sweyn, the king of Denmark, to the conquest of the island. Sweyn wisely declined the dangerous invitation; Tostig then, caring little what rival he raised to his brother, went to Norway, and pressed Harold Hardrada, the king of that country, to invade England. Hardrada could not resist the temptation; and, early in autumn, he set sail with a formidable fleet. Having touched at the Orkneys, where he left his queen, and procured a large reinforcement of pirates and adventurers, Hardrada made for England, and sailed up the Tyne, taking and plundering several towns. He then continued his course southwards, and, being joined by Tostig, sailed up the Humber and the Ouse. The Norwegian king and the Saxon traitor landed their united forces not far from the city of York. The earls Morcar and Edwin, true to Harold and their trust, marched boldly out from York; but they were defeated, after a desperate conflict, and compelled to flee. The citizens of York then opened their gates to the Norwegian conqueror.

HAROLD
(From an old coin)

Through all the summer months the last of the Saxon monarchs had been busily engaged watching the southern coast, where he expected William to land; but now, giving up for the moment every thought of the Normans, he united nearly all his forces, and marched most rapidly to the north. This march was so skilfully managed that the invaders had no notion of the advance; and they were taken by surprise when Harold burst upon them like a thunderbolt, in the neighbourhood of York, a very few days after their landing. Hardrada drew up his forces as best he could, at Stamford bridge. Before joining battle, Harold detached twenty mail-clad horsemen to parley with that wing of the enemy where the standard of Tostig was seen; and one of these warriors asked if Earl Tostig was there. Tostig answered for himself, and said, "You know he is here." The horsemen then, in the name of his brother, King Harold, offered him peace and the whole of Northumbria; or, if that were too little, the third part of the realm of England.

"And what territory would Harold give in compensation to my ally Hardrada, king of Norway?" The horsemen replied, "Seven feet of English

ground for a grave; or a little more, seeing that Hardrada is taller than most men." "Ride back," cried Tostig, "and bid King Harold make ready for the fight. When the Northmen tell the story of this day, they shall never say that Earl Tostig forsook King Hardrada, the son of Sigurd. He and I have one mind and one resolve, and that is either to die in battle or to possess all England." Soon after, the action commenced; it was long, fierce, and bloody, but the victory was decisive and in favour of Harold. Hardrada fell, with nearly every one of his chiefs, and the greater part of the Norwegians perished. Tostig, the cause of the war, was slain soon after Hardrada. Even the Norwegian fleet fell into the hands of the conqueror, who had the generosity to permit Olaf, the son of Hardrada, to depart, with all the survivors, in twenty-four ships, after that prince had sworn that he would forever maintain faith and friendship to England.

THE LANDING OF WILLIAM

Only three days after this signal victory the Normans landed in the south. Harold received this news as he was sitting joyfully at table in the good city of York; but, taking his measures with his usual rapidity, he instantly began his march towards London. Upon his way, his forces, which had suffered tremendously in the battle against the Norwegians, were weakened by discontents and desertion; and not a few men were left behind by the speed of his march, from the effects of their wounds and from sheer fatigue. In number, spirit, discipline, appointment, and in all other essentials, the enemies he had now to encounter were most formidable. They have well been called "the most remarkable and formidable armament which the western nations had seen, since some degree of regularity and order had been introduced into their civil and military arrangements." [Mackintosh.][p]

By the middle of August the whole of William's fleet, with the land troops on board, had assembled at the mouth of the Dive, a small river which falls into the sea between the Seine and the Orne. The total number of vessels amounted to about three thousand, of which six hundred or seven hundred were of a superior order. During a whole month the winds were contrary, and kept the Norman fleet in that port.

During this delay some of the ships were wrecked, and their crews drowned on the coast. In consequence of all this, not a few of the discouraged adventurers broke their engagements, and withdrew from the army; and the rest were inclined to believe that providence had declared against the war. To check these feelings, which might have proved fatal to his projects, William caused the bodies of the shipwrecked to be privately buried as soon as they were found, and increased the rations both of food and strong drink. "He is mad!" murmured the soldiers, "who seeks to take possession of another's country! God is offended at such designs, and this he shows now by refusing us a fair wind." The duke then had recourse to something more potent than bread and wine. He caused the body of St. Valery to be taken from his shrine and carried in procession through the camp, the knights, soldiers, camp-followers, and sailors, all devoutly kneeling as it passed, and praying for the saint's intercession. In the course of the ensuing night the weather changed, and the wind blew fair from the Norman to the English coast. The troops repaired to their several ships, and at an early hour the next morning the whole fleet set sail. William led the van, in a vessel which had been presented to him for the occasion by his wife Matilda, and which was distin-

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guished by its splendid decorations in the day and in the darkness of night by a brilliant light at its masthead. The consecrated banner, sent from Rome by the pope, floated at the main topmast, and the invader had put a cross upon his flag, in testimony of the holiness of his undertaking.

The Norman fleet came to anchor on the Sussex coast, without meeting with any resistance; for Harold's ships, which so long had cruised on that coast, had been called elsewhere, or had returned into port through want of pay and provisions. It was on the 28th of September, 1066, that the Normans landed unopposed at a place called Bulverhithe, between Pevensey and Hastings. The duke was the last man to land; and as his foot touched the sand, he made a false step, and fell upon his face. A murmur instantly succeeded this trifling mishap, and the soldiery cried out, "God keep us! but here is a bad sign!" The Conqueror's presence of mind never forsook him, and, leaping gaily to his feet, and showing them his hand full of English earth or sand, he exclaimed, "What now? What astonishes you? I have taken seisin of this land with my hands, and, by the splendour of God! as far as it extends it is mine—it is yours!"

From the landing-place the army marched to Hastings, near to which town he traced a fortified camp, and set up two of the wooden castles or towers that he had brought with him from Normandy. Detached corps of Normans then overran all the neighbouring country, pillaging and burning the houses. The English concealed their goods and their cattle, and repaired in crowds to the sacred protection of their inland churches. William personally surveyed all the neighbouring country, and occupied the old Roman castle of Pevensey with a strong detachment. He was presently welcomed into England by the remnant of the old Norman court party which had been so predominant in the days of the late king. It is probable that the disembarking would occupy two or three days; but sixteen days elapsed between their arrival and the battle, and in all that time William made no advance into the country, but lingered within a few miles of the coast where he had landed.

On reaching London, where he appears to have been well received by the people, Harold manned seven hundred vessels, and sent them round to hinder William's escape; for he made no doubt of vanquishing the Normans, even as he had so recently vanquished the Norwegians. Reinforcements of troops came in from all quarters except from the north; and another of his Norman spies and advisers, who was residing in the capital, informed the duke there were grounds for apprehending that in a few days the Saxon army would be swelled to one hundred thousand men. But Harold was irritated by the ravages committed in the country by the invaders; he was impatient to meet them: and, hoping to profit a second time by a sudden and unexpected attack, he marched off for the Sussex coast by night, only six days after his arrival in London, and with forces inferior in numbers to those of William.

The camp of William was well guarded; and, to prevent all surprise, he had thrown out advanced posts to a considerable distance. These posts, composed of good cavalry, fell back as the Saxons approached, and told William that Harold was rushing on with the speed and fury of a madman. On his side, Harold despatched some spies, who spoke the French language, to ascertain the position and state of preparation of the Normans. Both these the returning spies reported to be formidable, and they added, with astonishment, that there were more priests in William's camp than there were soldiers in the English army. These men had mistaken for priests all the Norman soldiers that had short hair and shaven upper lips; for it was then the fashion of the English to let both their hair and their moustaches grow long.

Harold smiled at their mistake, and said, "Those whom you have found in such great numbers are not priests, but brave men of war, who will soon show us what they are worth." He then halted his army at Senlac, since called Battle, and, changing his plan, surrounded his camp with ditches and palisades, and waited the attack of his rival in that well-chosen position.

One whole day was passed in fruitless negotiations, the nature of which is differently reported by the old chroniclers. According to William of Poitiers,[u] who was chaplain to the Conqueror, and had the best means of information, and the writer or writers of the *Chronicle of Normandy*,[v] a monk named Hugh Maigrot was despatched to demand from Harold, in the name of William, that he would do one of three things: resign his crown in favour of the Norman, submit to the arbitration of the pope, or decide the quarrel by single combat. Harold sent a refusal to all of these proposals, upon which William charged the monk with this last message: "Go, and tell Harold that if he will keep his old bargain with me, I will leave him all the country beyond the river Humber, and will give his brother Gurth all the lands of his father, Earl Godwin; but if he obstinately refuse what I offer him, thou wilt tell him, before all his people, that he is perjured and a liar; that he and all those who shall support him are excommunicated by the pope, and that I carry a bull to that effect." The *Norman Chronicle* says that the monk Hugh pronounced this message in a solemn tone, and at the word "excommunication," the English chiefs gazed upon one another in great dismay; but that, nevertheless, they all resolved to fight to the last, well knowing that the Norman had promised their lands to his nobles, his captains, and his knights, who had already done homage for them.

THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS OR SENLAC (1066 A.D.)

The Normans quitted Hastings, and occupied an eminence opposite to the English, plainly showing that they intended to give battle on the morrow. Several reasons had been pressed upon Harold by his followers, and were now repeated, why he should decline the combat, or absent himself from its perilous chances. It was urged that the desperate situation of the duke of Normandy forced him to bring matters to a speedy decision, and put his whole fortune on the issue of a battle, for his provisions were already exhausted, and his supplies from beyond sea would be rendered precarious both by the storms of the coming winter and the operations of the English fleet, which had already blockaded all the ships William kept with him in the ports of Pevensey and Hastings; but that he, the king of England, in his own country, and well provided with provisions, might bide his own time, and harass with skirmishes a decreasing enemy, who would be exposed to all the discomforts of an inclement season and deep miry roads; that if a general action were now avoided, the whole mass of the English people, made sensible of the danger that threatened their property, their honour, and their liberties, would reinforce his army from all quarters, and by degrees render it invincible. As he turned a deaf ear to all these arguments, his brother Gurth, who was greatly attached to him, and a man of bravery and good counsel, endeavoured to persuade him not to be present at the action, but to set out for London, and bring up the levies, while his best friends should sustain the attack of the Normans.

"O Harold," said the young man, "thou canst not deny that, either by force or free-will, thou hast made Duke William an oath upon the body of

THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS

(From the engraving by A. H. Payne of the painting by P. J. De Loutherbourg)

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saints; why, then, adventure thyself in the dangers of the combat with a perjury against thee? To us, who have sworn nothing, this war is proper and just, for we defend our country. Leave us, then, alone to fight this battle—thou wilt succour us if we are forced to retreat, and if we die thou wilt avenge us." To this touching appeal Harold answered that his duty forbade him to keep at a distance whilst others risked their lives; and, determined to fight and full of confidence in the justice of his cause, he awaited the morrow with his usual courage. The night was cold and clear. It was spent very differently by the hostile armies: the English feasted and rejoiced, singing their old national songs, and emptying their horn-cups, which were well filled with beer and wine; the Normans, having looked to their arms and to their horses, listened to their priests and monks, who prayed and sang litanies; and that over, the soldiers confessed themselves, and took the sacrament by thousands at a time.

The day of trial—Saturday, the 14th of October—was come. As day dawned, Odo, the bishop of Bayeux, a half-brother of Duke William, celebrated mass, and gave his benediction to the troops, being armed the while in a coat of mail, which he wore under his episcopal rochet; and when the mass and the blessing were over, he mounted a war-horse, which the old chroniclers, with their interesting minuteness of detail, tell us was large and white, took a lance in his hand, and marshalled his brigade of cavalry. William rode a fine Spanish horse, which a rich Norman had brought him on his return from a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Iago (Santiago) of Galicia: he wore suspended round his neck some of those revered relics upon which Harold had sworn, and the standard blessed by the pope was carried at his side by one Tonstain, surnamed the White, or the Fair, who accepted the honourable but dangerous office, after two Norman barons had declined it. Just before giving the word to advance, he briefly addressed his collected host: "Make up your minds to fight valiantly, and slay your enemies. A great booty is before us: for if we conquer we shall all be rich; what I gain you will gain—if I take this land, you will have it in lots among you. Know ye, however, that I am not come hither solely to take what is my due, but also to avenge our whole nation for the felonies, perjuries, and treachery of these English. They massacred our kinsmen the Danes—men, women, and children—on the night of St. Brice; they murdered the knights and good men who accompanied Prince Ælfred from Normandy, and made my cousin Ælfred expire in torture. Before you is the son of that Earl Godwin who was charged with these murders. Let us forward, and punish him, with God to our aid!" [b]

About the third hour of the day, *i.e.* nine A.M., William launched his forces against the living castle on the heights of Battle. The three divisions, attacking from three different sides, had somewhat different tasks before them. The right wing would advance in the first instance along the road, to attack and if possible outflank the English left. Deploying to the right from the road, they would have first to wind round the eastern spur of the hill, to find on the farther side slopes so steep as to be unassailable by mail-clad infantry, not to say by cavalry. The centre, deploying leftwards from the road, would have a fairly even gradient up to the plateau. The left, however, would have the most arduous duty to fulfil: they would have to make a circuitous flank march up and across rather broken ground, with a jutting knoll or hillock in their way, to the western spur of the Battle hill, and so up its slopes to the English right. A little watercourse to their left and rear would probably be hardly noticed in their advance.

As the troops were moving out a Norman juggling minstrel, who had gained the name of Taille-fer (Cut-iron), probably from some feat he was in the habit of exhibiting, asked for and obtained leave to break a first lance with the English. Gaily singing a lay of Roland, and Oliver, and Charlemagne, he rode up the height, tossing his sword in the air, and again catching it by the hilt as it fell. English skirmishers having come out to meet him, he ran one through the body with his lance, cut down a second one with his sword and then, overcome by superior numbers, succumbed. The Normans consoled themselves for his loss by the thought that their side had struck the first blow.

Pressing stoutly from all sides up the hill, the Normans attacked the English shield-wall. "*Dex aïe*" (God help us) was their cry, while the natives answered with shouts of "*Halig-Rod*" (Holy Rood) and "*God Eallmihtig*" (God Almighty). Not an inch of level ground had they left for the Normans to set foot on. Firmly posted on the brink of the plateau, they showered javelins and stone hammers on the heads of their assailants; while, independently of their vantage ground, their superior strength and stature gave deadly effect to their blows.

William had hoped to carry the day with his infantry, without engaging his precious cavalry; but he soon found that all the three arms of his force had to be sent to the front. Even so the Bretons and others on the Norman left were unable to hold their ground. Overwhelmed with missiles, they wavered, broke, and finally fled. A portion of the English right, unable to resist the temptation, left their ranks and chased them down the hill, driving many of them into the little brook or ditch running along the low ground in their rear. The disorder extended to the Norman centre, and the whole line fell back. The duke apparently was unhorsed, and the cry was raised that he was killed. Bishop Odo threw himself across the line of the fugitives, while William, roughly unseating an auxiliary, mounted his steed and hastened to the rescue. Throwing his helmet back, he shouted aloud, "Here I am, alive, and please God we shall win yet." The flight having been arrested, the tables were quickly turned on those of the English who had ventured too far down the hill in their pursuit; they were surrounded and cut off. Not a man escaped, but a good many of the invaders had lost their lives in the brook.

Encouraged by this success, the Normans reformed and returned to their attack on the English position. But the living wall, in spite of some gaps, still showed a front substantially unbroken. The man who attempted to break in was hurled out again or lost his life. One advantage of the native position on the plateau was that the Norman archers had nothing to aim at except the shields of the front-rank men, the rear ranks being covered by them and out of sight. William directed his men to aim over the heads of the front ranks, so as to allow their arrows to fall among the masses in the rear. By one of these dropping shots, as we may suppose, Harold lost his right eye, and was incapacitated for further part in the struggle. Supporting himself in his agony on his shield, he still kept his post manfully by the standard.[1] But still William made no headway. After a second determined assault of uncertain duration he was driven to the conclusion that his means

[1] So the *Roman de Rou*,[w] and H. Huntingdon;[e] the only writers who distinguish between the wound from the arrow and Harold's death. Malmesbury[d] represents him as killed outright by the arrow. Guy of Amiens[x] and William of Poitiers,[u] ignoring the arrow, represent him as merely overwhelmed in the final assault. William of Jumièges[y] and Orderic[z] represent him as killed (*occubit, peremptus*) early in the day, when apparently in fact he was only placed *hors de combat*.

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of offence were not greater than those of the English defence, and that unless the English could be lured from their vantage ground he could not win. Taking a hint from the earlier incidents of the day, he resolved to try the effect of a feigned retreat.

A feigned retreat, of course, is a hazardous experiment, but it must be confessed that William risked it under circumstances exceptionally favourable to the manœuvre. On his left the thing would be impossible. Retreat there would bring his men into the brook. But on his right a retrograde movement of four hundred or five hundred yards would bring his men to the bottom of the valley with the opposite hill at their backs, and the Hastings road on which to reform and renew the struggle with the ground all in their favour. The English, destitute of cavalry, would be unable to take any decided advantage of the short critical period of downward retreat. The result was entirely successful, a portion of the English again bursting wildly from their ranks, to be met and overwhelmed in the bottom. If the feigned retreat was executed by the duke's extreme right along the road, the English would be taken in flank by the duke himself.

"In vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird." So thought the Preacher. We, however, positively groan with humiliation when we hear that the transparent trick could be repeated; and that again our foolhardy, undisciplined ancestors, incapable of profiting by experience, could walk into the open trap. But even after this third disaster we are distinctly told that the English were not routed, and that their main body on the height was still formidable, still in possession of a site that could not be turned. From this we may infer that the successive parties that broke from the ranks were not really very numerous, otherwise these losses would have ended the day.

Nevertheless it is clear that the struggle now entered upon a new stage. Unbroken though the English phalanx might seem to be, it could no longer hold the whole area of the plateau. The Normans were now able to establish a footing there, and to carry on the fight on more equal terms. In fact, the English appear to have been reduced to a purely defensive attitude, the attitude of a tortoise or a hedgehog, their missiles being exhausted, while the Normans, now here, now there, hacked at them wherever they saw an opening. To such a contest there could be but one issue. At last William ordered a combined charge on the central point marked by the standard. According to the bishop of Amiens, Eustace of Boulogne, Ivo of Ponthieu, Hugh the Constable, and Walter Giffard led the assault. At last the English gave way. The shield-wall was broken, the standard beaten down. Harold fell beside it, while the relics of the native force were driven bodily down the slight reverse slope, on to the neck of the isthmus.

Downwards the English were driven, but not for far, nor was the contest altogether ended yet. After a few yards of descent from the gatehouse the ground rises again towards the north, the ascent becoming somewhat steep at the end of the village. Here the English masses, arrested by the hill, halted, and once more turned at bay. The Norman cavalry, pressing on in hot pursuit, swerved from the bristling pikes, and turned, apparently, to the left, to fall headlong into the head of the western ravine, which, in the shape of a *couloir* or ditch, comes within a hundred yards of the roadway. Brushwood and undergrowth masked the pitfall of the treacherous Malfosse.

Eustace, who led the pursuit, thinking that enough had been done, was prepared to stay his hand in face of this check. He was turning back and sounding the retreat, when William met him and sternly ordered him to the front. The duke would hear of no cessation till the last semblance of resist-

ance had been crushed. While the two were parleying in the failing light, the count received a blow between the shoulders that hurled him from his horse, with blood flowing from his mouth and nostrils. Under the duke's own eye the bloody work was kept up, until towards sunset the last of the English had been trodden under foot or dispersed. Some sought hiding-places in the woods; those who had horses galloped off along the London road. Some seven hours the battle must have lasted, say from nine A.M. till four P.M., if not later. Harold's two brothers were found beside him, doubtless killed in the same final charge.

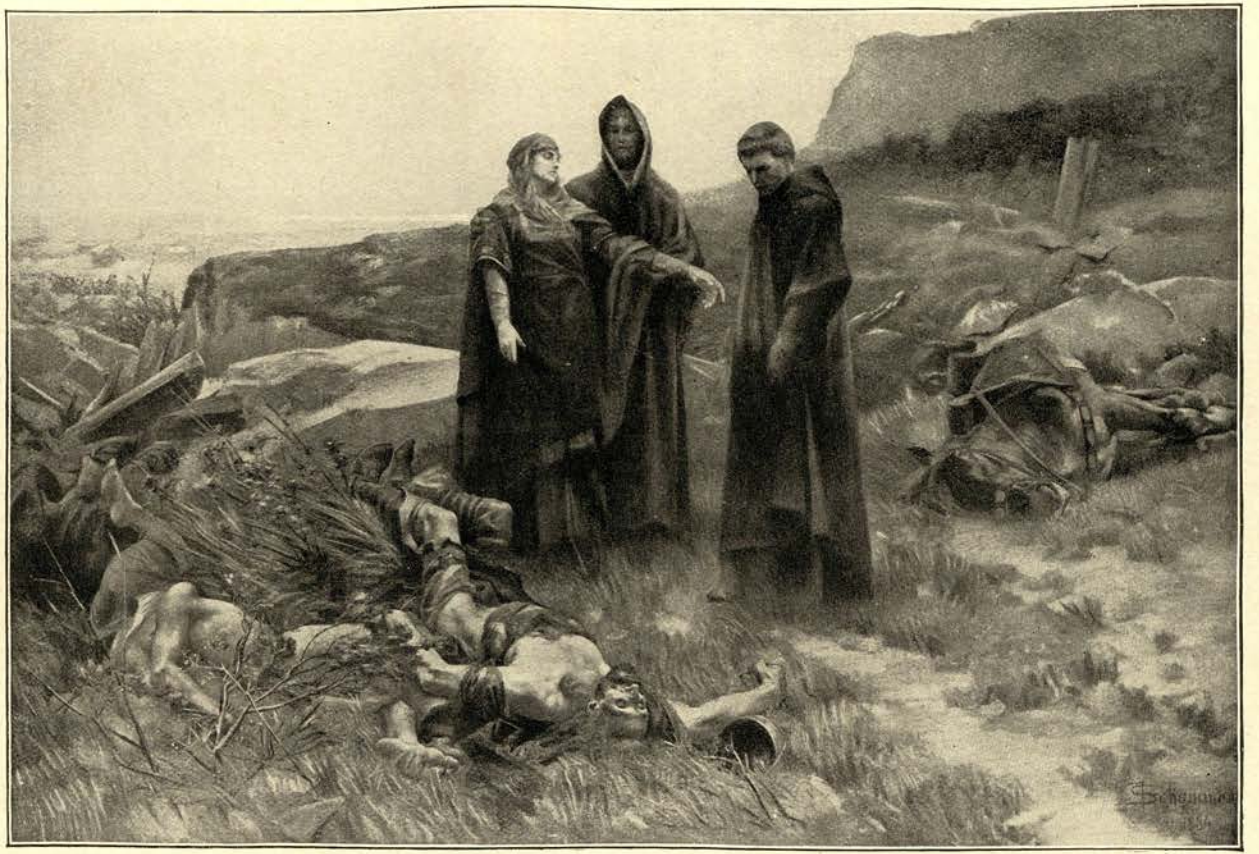
On the heights of Senlac the loose, primitive Anglo-Saxon polity collapsed with a final crash. The system so often tried and found wanting had received its death-blow. The catastrophe gave final proof that, under existing circumstances, the nation was too self-willed, too undisciplined, too much sunk in the ruts of insular conservatism to be able to turn the fine natural qualities of its people to account. Whatever our racial sympathies, we cannot regret a result destined to convert a sluggish country, paralysed by feudalism, localism, and home rule, into a compact, well-ordered kingdom, able not only to defend itself at home, but also in due time to prosecute a great and glorious imperial career abroad.

The victory was a signal triumph for the Normans—or rather for their duke, as to his generalship and his unflinching purpose the result was clearly due. Three horses were killed under him. On the English side no higher merit than that of dogged courage and tenacity can be claimed; but that much their enemies could not refuse them. "They were ever ready with their steel, those sons of the old Saxon race; the most dauntless of men," wrote William of Poitiers.[u] At the time the result would doubtless be claimed as final proof of the superiority of that cavalry on which continental armies had come to depend. So far as any tactical lesson is to be derived from the day, we would rather look on it as bearing witness to the effectiveness of the long-bow; and to the advantage of fighting in open order as against fighting in solid columns. But the result was too plainly due to want of discipline and leadership on the part of the English to be taken as a text to point any other moral.[g] [1]

TRADITIONS CONCERNING HAROLD

The victor is now installed; but what has become of his competitor? If we ask the monk of Malmesbury,[d] we are told that William surrendered the body to Harold's mother, Githa, by whose directions the corpse of the last surviving of her children was buried in the abbey of the Holy Cross. Those who lived nearer the time, however, relate in explicit terms that William refused the rites of sepulture to his excommunicated enemy. William of Poitiers,[u] the chaplain of the Conqueror, informs us that a body of which the features were undistinguishable, but supposed, from certain tokens, to be that of Harold, was found between the corpses of his brothers, Gurth and Leofwine, and that William caused this corpse to be interred in the sands of the

[[1] In regard to the much disputed question as to the number of troops engaged, Longman[m] says, "According to the most credible accounts, each army consisted of about fifty or sixty thousand men." Ramsay[g] comes to a radically different conclusion. According to him there are no "credible accounts" when the question of estimating the numbers of an army is under consideration by one of the mediæval chroniclers. An exaggeration of ten times the ascertainable figure, he asserts, is not uncommon. Of the Conqueror's army he says he should consider an estimate of ten thousand men "beyond credibility."]



EDITH FINDING THE BODY OF HAROLD

(From the painting by François Schommer, 1884)

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seashore. "Let him guard the coast," said William, "which he so madly occupied"; and though Githa had offered to purchase the body by its weight in gold, yet William was not to be tempted by the gift of the sorrowing mother nor touched by her tears.

In the abbey of Waltham they knew nothing of Githa. According to the annals of the convent, two brethren who had accompanied Harold hovered as nearly as possible to the scene of war, watching the event of the battle: and afterwards they humbly approached William, and solicited his permission to seek the corpse. The Conqueror permitted them to proceed to the field, and to bear away not only the remains of Harold but of all who, when living, had chosen the abbey of Waltham as their place of sepulture.

Amongst the loathsome heaps of the unburied they sought for Harold, but sought in vain. As the last hope of identifying his remains, they suggested that possibly his beloved Editha[1] might be able to recognise the features so familiar to her affections. Ealdgyth, the wife of Harold, was not to be asked to perform this sorrowful duty. One of the monks went back to Waltham and returned with Editha, and the two canons and the weeping woman resumed their miserable task in the charnel field. A ghastly, decomposing, and mutilated corpse was selected by Editha, and conveyed to Waltham as the body of Harold, and there entombed at the east end of the choir, with great honour and solemnity, many Norman nobles assisting in the requiem.

Years afterwards, when the Norman yoke pressed heavily upon the English, and the battle of Hastings had become a tale of sorrow, which old men narrated by the light of the embers, until warned to silence by the sullen tolling of the curfew, there was a decrepit anchorite, who inhabited a cell near the abbey of St. John at Chester, where Eadgar celebrated his triumph. This recluse, deeply scarred, and blinded in his left eye, lived in strict penitence and seclusion. Henry I once visited the aged hermit and had a long private discourse with him; and, on his deathbed, he declared to the attendant monks that he was Harold. As the story is transmitted to us, he had been secretly conveyed from the field to a castle, probably of Dover, where he continued concealed until he had the means of reaching the sanctuary where he expired.

The monks of Waltham loudly exclaimed against this rumour. They maintained most resolutely that Harold was buried in their abbey: they pointed to the tomb sustaining his effigies, and inscribed with the simple and pathetic epitaph, "*Hic jacet Harold infelix*"; and they appealed to the mouldering skeleton, whose bones, as they declared, showed, when disinterred, the impress of the wounds which he had received. But may it not still be doubted whether the two monks who followed their benefactor to the fatal field did not aid his escape? They may have discovered him at the last gasp; restored him to animation by their care; and the artifice of declaring to William that they had not been able to recover the object of their search would readily suggest itself as the means of rescuing Harold from the power of the conqueror. The demand for Editha's testimony would confirm their assertion, and enable them to gain time to arrange for Harold's security; and whilst the litter which bore the corpse was slowly advancing to the abbey of Waltham, the living Harold, under the tender care of Editha, might be safely proceeding to the distant fane, his haven of refuge.

[1 This was Eadgyth or Editha, "the Swansneck" (*Swanneshals*), Harold's mistress, whose long and tender attachment to the king was looked upon with general approval by the people, and accepted without complaint by the queen, to whom Harold appears to have been otherwise faithful.]

If we compare the different narratives concerning the inhumation of Harold, we shall find the most remarkable discrepancies. It is evident that the circumstances were not accurately known; and since those ancient writers who were best informed cannot be reconciled to each other, the escape of Harold, if admitted, would solve the difficulty. It may be remarked that the tale, though romantic, is not incredible, and that the circumstances may be easily reconciled to probability. There were no walls to be scaled, no fosse to be crossed, no warder to be eluded; and the examples of those who have survived after encountering much greater perils are so very numerous and familiar that the incidents narrated would hardly give rise to a doubt, if they referred to any other personage than a king.

In this case we cannot find any reason for supposing that the belief in Harold's escape was connected with any political artifice or feeling. No hopes were fixed upon the son of Godwin. No recollection dwelt upon his name, as the hero who would sally forth from his seclusion, the restorer of the Anglo-Saxon power. That power had wholly fallen; and if the humbled Englishman, as he paced the aisles of Waltham, looked around, and having assured himself that no Norman was near, whispered to his son that the tomb which they saw before them was raised only in mockery, and that Harold still breathed the vital air—he yet knew too well that the spot where Harold's standard had been cast down was the grave of the pride and glory of England.[c]

ANGLO-SAXON INSTITUTIONS

The Anglo-Saxon institutions were not arbitrarily created by any one law-giver or during any one age. They grew by degrees; and they grew also in a country which was an almost perpetual scene of war and tumult, and which was inhabited by races of different origin; so that the local development of these institutions varied, besides their temporary fluctuations. It is unsafe to attempt to give more than a general idea of their leading features, which must be variously worked out in detail, according to the particular reign and the particular part of England to which it is meant to be applied.

One class of the community in Anglo-Saxon times (though probably no very large portion) was in a state of absolute slavery. They were known in Saxon by the names of theow, esne, and thrall. They probably originally consisted of conquered Britons; but as criminals who could not pay the fine imposed by law were reducible to this state, many unfortunate beings of German ancestry must in process of time have been comprised in this degraded and suffering class. The freemen of the land were classified by a broad division into the ceorls, who formed the bulk of the population, and into the thanes, who formed the nobility and the gentry. Sometimes the classification is made into ceorls and eorls; the title of eorl having reference to birth, whereas the title of thane had reference to the possession of landed property. It was this, the ownership of landed property, that mainly determined the *status* and political rights of a Saxon freeman, and therefore the classification into ceorls and thanes is the most convenient to follow. There is an additional reason for doing so, because the Danes used the title eorl (jarl, earl) to designate authority and command; and when the Danish influence extended in Saxon England, the title of earl was employed, not to mark a man of good birth but the ruler of a shire or other district. Both the democratic and the aristocratic principles entered largely into the Anglo-Saxon polity; the latter finally obtaining the ascendency, chiefly by reason of the strictness of the regulations which it was

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found necessary to introduce, in order to maintain some degree of public peace and to give some security for property and person, amid the tumult and confusion which prevailed so often and so generally in England during the troubled ages of the Anglo-Saxon rule.

One great fact, however, never must be forgotten while we examine the Anglo-Saxon institutions and mark the privileges which the thanes (*i.e.* the landed proprietors) possessed over the mass of the free commonalty, the ceorls. The superior body was not composed of a hereditary caste or noblesse. It was an aristocracy, but it was open to receive recruits from the ranks below it. Any ceorl, who could acquire a defined amount of landed property, could become a thane.

It is convenient to examine the Anglo-Saxon social body, by commencing with its component parts. This method is recommended by Palgrave, and (subject to some slight additions and qualifications) we may safely follow him in taking the Anglo-Saxon townships as the integral molecule out of which the Anglo-Saxon state was formed. He says: "Ascending in the analysis of the Anglo-Saxon state, the first and primary element appears to be the community, which in England, during the Saxon period, was denominated the town, or township. An explanation of the term may be required. Denoting in its primary sense the enclosure which surrounded the mere homestead or dwelling of the lord, it seems to have been gradually extended to the whole of the land which constituted the domain."

There was a lord of every township, usually one of the more opulent thanes, though some townships belonged to the sovereign as their superior. We will, however, limit our attention to the ordinary and normal case, where a resident thane was lord of the township. He dwelt there on his own demesne lands. Round him there were grouped a number of ceorls, some occupying allotments of land, some tilling the lands of others. Each township had its gerefa, or reeve, an elective chief officer; and also in each township four good and lawful men were elected, who, with the reeve, represented the township in the judicial courts of the hundred and the shire. All these appear to have been freely elected by the commonalty of each township from among their own body. The inhabitants of each township regulated their own police. They were bound to keep watch and ward; and if any crime was committed in their district, they were to raise the hue and cry, and to pursue and apprehend the offender. Such were the townships: having, generally, each its own local court, with varying amounts of jurisdiction; and being subordinate to the hundred court, which was again subordinate to the shire moot or county court.

This leads us to consider the English hundreds, which subsist to this day, though the townships have become almost obsolete, having been superseded partly by the Norman manors, and partly in consequence of the ecclesiastical division into parishes having been adopted for the purposes of petty local self-government. Whether the hundreds had originally any reference to number or not, it is certain that they ultimately became mere territorial divisions. And, both in order to facilitate the organization of the inhabitants for military purposes and to afford better security against crime, the hundreds were subdivided into tythings. In one respect, the system of tything was more comprehensive than the system of townships, as there may have been land not included in any township, and which would yet be within a hundred, and consequently would, when hundreds were subdivided, be brought within a tything.

Every hundred had its court, which was attended by the thanes whose demesnes were within its boundaries, and by the four men and the reeve of each township. The hundred court was held monthly, and was subordinate

to the court of the shire. The shire or county courts were held at least once a year. They were presided over by the bishop and the ealdorman or earl. Each shire had also its reeve, who, in the absence of the ealdorman, was the president of its court, in conjunction with the bishop. All the thanes in the county, the four men, and the reeve of each township, and the twelve men chosen to represent each hundred, attended the county court; but it is justly doubted whether any but the thanes had a voice in it. Though an appeal from it seems to have lain to the witenagemot, the supreme court of the kingdom, and though the witan in some cases sometimes exercised an original jurisdiction, the shire moots were in practice the most important tribunals in the country, and both they and the minor ones, which we have referred to, were certainly of a very free and popular character.

So far the Anglo-Saxon system seems democratic enough; but even before we proceed to the consideration of the witenagemot there are two features to be attended to which are of a very different character. Every member of the Anglo-Saxon commonalty was bound to place himself in dependence upon some man of rank and wealth, as his lord. The "lordless" man was liable to be slain as an outlaw by anyone who met him. Besides this, by the system of frank pledge, every man was bound to be enrolled in some tything; the members of each tything being mutually responsible for each other's good conduct—to this extent at least, that if any one of them committed a crime the rest were bound either to render him to justice to take his trial, or to make good the fine to which, in his absence, he might be sentenced. The effect of these regulations was almost to limit every man to the place and neighbourhood of his nativity; for it was difficult and almost impossible to get enrolled in a tything or to find a lord in a place where a man was not known. At the same time, it is to be borne in mind that this species of compulsory settlement inflicted far less hardship in Anglo-Saxon times, when there was little traffic or communication between one district and another and little inducement for a poor man to try to change his home, than has been in modern times caused by our laws of settlement and removal.

The recollection of this will keep us from exaggerating the importance of one point in the position of the ceorls, which has caused some writers to speak of it as a state of servitude. Many of the Saxon ceorls were legally annexed to the lands of their lords, and could not quit the estate on which they had to render their services. But the ceorl was in other respects personally free. He was law-worthy, to use the old expressive phraseology. Among the Anglo-Saxons (as among all the other northern nations) a composition, or *were-gild*, was fixed by the law for the slaying of any member of the state, according to the class to which he belonged. The were-gild for the death of a ceorl was two hundred shillings, and was payable to his family, and not to the lord of the estate on which he lived. But the fine for killing a slave was paid to the slave's owner. The ceorl had the right of bearing arms. He was a legal witness. As already pointed out, he had political rights with regard to the magistracies of his township, his tything, and his hundred, both as an elector and as himself eligible to office. He could acquire and hold property in absolute ownership; and he needed no act of emancipation to pass into the class of thanes, if he acquired the requisite property qualification of five hides of land. Many of the ceorls were landowners to a smaller extent. Hallam[r] considers the socmen, who are frequently spoken of in *Domesday Book*, to have been ceorls of this description. He says, "They are the root of a noble plant, the free socage tenants, or English yeomanry, whose independence has stamped with peculiar features both our constitution and our national character."

By far the larger part of the population in the Anglo-Saxon times was agricultural, but the towns were of considerable importance. The free spirit of local self-government which marks the Anglo-Saxon polity as displayed in its rural and village communities, was no less strongly developed in their cities and towns. The burg (as the town was usually called, meaning, literally, a fortified place) was organised like a hundred, having subdivisions analogous to those of the hundred, according to its size and population. The *burhwara*, or men of the borough, elected from among themselves their local officers for keeping the peace, and other purposes of municipal government. They thus also freely chose their own borough-reeve, or port-reeve, as their head of the civic community was termed. This officer presided at their local courts (the burhwaremot, or hustings), and in time of war led the armed burghers into the field. Sometimes the king, or a bishop, or a neighbouring lord claimed and exercised seigniorial rights within the borough; nor can any description of the Saxon municipal system be drawn that could be uniformly accurate. But, in general, we may safely assert that the Saxon boroughs were thriving and were free; that they were strongholds, where the germs of England's commercial prosperity, and of the capacity of the Anglo-Saxon race for local self-government, were matured, amid the turbulence of a rude age and the attempted encroachments of royal and aristocratic power.

Many political writers of the last century used to describe the witenagemot as a genuine English parliament annually elected by universal suffrage. Palgrave, Hallam,[r] and Kemble, however they may differ among themselves on points of detail, have effectually dispelled these monstrous and often mischievous delusions. The witan was essentially an aristocratic body. It was summoned and presided over by the king. It was attended by the bishops, by the earls or ealdormen: the thanes generally had a right to attend; and probably those who resided in the neighbourhood of the place where a witan was held did attend in considerable numbers. For the purpose of appealing against the decisions of inferior tribunals, and of procuring justice against powerful individuals, whom the minor courts could not reach, the magistrates of boroughs, and the four men or reeves of townships, and other similar officers, must have occasionally been present. This is what Sir Francis Palgrave terms "remedial representation." But there certainly were no representatives of the ceorls at the witan with any power to take part in or vote in its proceedings.

The witan made laws and voted taxes; but this last was a rare necessity. The king was bound to take their advice as to making war or peace, and on all important measures of government. The witan had the power of electing the king from among the members of the blood royal. They on some occasions exercised the power of deposing him for misconduct: and they formed the supreme court of justice both in civil and criminal causes. The nature and extent of the authority which the Anglo-Saxon kings possessed are partly shown by the description of the powers of the witan. But, in addition to many minor rights, the royal prerogatives of appointing many of the principal officers of government, of commanding and disposing of the military force of the kingdom were of considerable importance; and the personal character of the sovereign influenced materially the prosperity or adversity of the country, during the troubled centuries that passed between the accession of Egbert and the fall of the last Harold.

It has been stated that the bishops were members of the witan. The influence of the clergy in the Anglo-Saxon times was very great, the humblest priest ranking with the landed gentry as a mass thane. The ecclesiastical

distribution of the country into parishes (*i.e. preost scyres*, each being the district of a single priest) is Anglo-Saxon—a division since generally adopted for purposes of local self-government. It is to Saxon laws that modern disputants respecting tithes and church-rates refer for the original legal obligation on the English laity to provide those ecclesiastical revenues. Besides their right to these, the church was largely endowed with glebe for her parochial churches, and broad lands for her cathedrals and monasteries. The existence of one of these great ecclesiastical foundations in or near a city favoured the progress of municipal civilisation; and many of the towns grew up round the ancient cathedrals. The high officers of the church, her bishops and archbishops, were recognised as the highest officers of the state also. Kemble has well remarked on the effect of this alliance between church and state in the Saxon times, that "guilty of extravagances the clergy were here, no doubt, as elsewhere; but on the whole their position was not unfavourable to the harmonious working of the state; and the history of the Anglo-Saxons is perhaps as little deformed as any by the ambition, and power, and selfish class-interests of the clergy.

"On the other hand, it cannot be denied that in England, as in other countries, the laity are under the greatest obligations to them, partly for rescuing some branches of learning from total neglect and partly for the counterpoise which their authority presented to the rude and forcible government of a military aristocracy. Ridiculous as it would be to affirm that their influence was never exerted for mischievous purposes, or that this institution was always free from the imperfections and evils which belong to all human institutions, it would be still more unworthy of the dignity of history to affect to undervalue the services which they rendered to society. If in the pursuit of private and corporate advantages they occasionally seemed likely to prefer the separate to the general good, they did no more than all bodies of men have done—no more than is necessary to ensure the active co-operation of all bodies of men in any one line of conduct. But, whatever their class-interests may from time to time have led them to do, let it be remembered that they existed as a permanent mediating authority between the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, and that, to their eternal honour, they fully comprehended and performed the duties of this most noble position. To none but themselves would it have been permitted to stay the strong hand of power, to mitigate the just severity of the law, to hold out a glimmering of hope to the serf, to find a place in this world and a provision for the destitute, whose existence the state did not even recognise."

This last observation of Kemble refers to the wretched position of those outcasts of the Saxon civil community who could find no place in one of the mutual associations, the tythings, and find no lord who would permit them to become his retainers. These friendless, helpless beings could not have been very numerous (we are not speaking of the wilful outlaws who lived by brigandage, but of the involuntary outlaws), but some of them must have existed. Such a being had no existence in the eye of the law, the civil state regarded him not, but abandoned him to arbitrary violence or starvation. But (to adopt again the eloquent words of Kemble) Christianity "taught that there was something even above the state, which the state itself was bound to recognise." The church impressed the heavenly law by which the poor and needy, whom the earthly law condemned to misery, were to be relieved; and the clergy presented their organisation as an efficient machinery for the distribution of alms. There were other sources of relief for the poor. The tithes and other ecclesiastical revenues contributed their portion, and

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thus at every cathedral and every parish church there was a fund for the helpless pauper, and officers ready for its administration.

But, in approaching the period of the Norman Conquest, it may be usefully observed, with Guizot, that in the last period of the Anglo-Saxon system the power of the great nobles was becoming more and more predominant, so as to menace both the independence of the crown and the freedom of the commonalty. The earls, or ealdormen, the rulers of large provinces, like Earl Siward, Earl Leofric, Earl Godwin and his sons, and others, were forming a separate order in the state, through the aggressive influence of which the political rights and liberties of the others would probably have decayed and perished. The catastrophe of the Norman Conquest prevented this—a catastrophe terrible in itself, but in all human probability the averter of greater evils even to the Saxons themselves than those which it inflicted.*f*

ANGLO-SAXON LITERATURE

The early history of literature in England might lend some countenance to the theory that the development of a nation's literature is, at bottom, but a chapter of its religious history. While the religion of our fathers was in the main a rude awe-struck worship of the forces of nature, literature either had no existence for them or was in a state not less elementary, consisting of a few songs and oracles, and nothing more. With the advent of the religion of Christ came an intellectual as well as spiritual awakening. Fortified by gospel precept for the present life, and thrilled with the hope of the life to come, the Saxon mind, released from disquietude, felt free to range discursively through such regions of human knowledge as its teachers opened before it, and the Saxon heart was fain to pour out many a rude but vigorous song. The missionaries could not fail to bring with them from Rome the intellectual culture of the countries bordering on the Mediterranean, so far as it had survived the fall of the Western Empire and the irruption of the barbarians. The Roman alphabet, paper or parchment, and pen and ink, drove out the Northern runes, the beechen tablet, and the scratching implement. The necessity of the preservation and at least partial translation of the Scriptures, the varied exigencies of the Catholic ritual, the demand for so much knowledge of astronomy as would enable the clergy to fix beforehand the date of Easter, all favoured, or rather compelled, the promotion of learning and education up to a certain point, and led to continual discussion and interchange of ideas. We find that there were two principal centres, during the first two centuries after the conversion, where learning was honoured and literature flourished. These centres were Wessex and Northumbria. When we have named the oldest form of the Saxon chronicle, and the not very interesting works of Abbot Ælfric, there is little left in the shape of extant writings, dating before the Conquest, for which we have to thank the men of Kent. For although Christianity was first preached in Kent, and the great monastery at Canterbury was long a valuable school of theology and history, yet the limited size of the kingdom, and the ill fortune which befell it in its wars with Mercia and Wessex, seem to have checked its intellectual growth. But in Wessex and Northumbria alike, the size of the territory, the presence of numerous monasteries, perhaps also the proximity of Celtic peoples or societies endowed with many literary gifts—the Britons in the case of Wessex, the Culdees of Iona in the case of Northumbria—co-operated to produce a long period of literary activity.

WESSEX

Christianity was introduced into Wessex by Bishop Birinus in 634, and spread over the whole kingdom with marvellous celerity. The interesting letters of St. Boniface give us tantalising glimpses of a busy life, social and monastic, in the west of England, no detailed picture of which it is now possible to reconstruct. The most distinguished known writer was St. Aldhelm, a monk of Malmesbury, and, for a few years before his death in 709, bishop of Sherborne. The Saxon writings of St. Aldhelm are lost, unless we accept a conjecture of Grimm that he was the author of *Andreas*, one of the poems in the Vercelli Codex. Cynewulf, the author of *Crist*, *Elene*, and *Juliana*, though to us unhappily no more than a name, was a poet of no mean powers. Kemble was disposed to identify him with an abbot of Peterborough who lived in the eleventh century; but it is far more probable that Cynewulf was a West-Saxon writer, and lived in the first half of the eighth century. *Crist* is a poem of nearly 1,700 lines, *incomplete at the beginning*, in which Cynewulf seems to revel in the task of expressing in his mother tongue the new religious ideas which had come to his race. *Elene* is the legend of the discovery of the true cross at Jerusalem by the empress Helena, the mother of Constantine; *Juliana* is the story of the martyrdom of the saint so named, under Maximianus.

The preponderance of opinion is now in favour of ascribing to Beowulf the most important surviving monument of Anglo-Saxon poetry, a West-Saxon origin, and a date not later than the middle nor earlier than the first decade, of the eighth century. Founded on a single manuscript which, as originally written, was full of errors, and now is much defaced, the text of Beowulf can never, unless another manuscript should be discovered, be placed on a thoroughly satisfactory footing. The general drift of the poem is to celebrate the heroic deeds of Beowulf, who, originally of Swedish race, was adopted by the king of Gautland, or Gotland (as the southern portion of Sweden is still called), and brought up with his own sons. Hearing that the Danish king Hrothgar is harassed by the attacks of a man-eating monster called Grendel, he sails to Zealand to his aid, and after various adventures kills both Grendel and his mother. After this Beowulf is chosen king of Gotland, and reigns many years in great prosperity, till in his old age, undertaking to fight with a fiery dragon that has been making great ravages among his subjects, he succeeds in killing it, but receives a mortal injury in the struggle. The burning of his body, and the erection of a huge mound or cairn over his ashes, as a beacon "easy to be seen far off by seafaring men," conclude the poem, and form a passage of remarkable beauty.

For two hundred and thirty years—from the sack of Lindisfarne (795) to the accession of Canute (1017)—the so-called Danes were the curse of England, destroying monasteries and the schools maintained by them, burning churches and private houses, making life and property everywhere insecure, and depriving the land of that tranquillity without which literature and art are impossible. After a long prevalence of this state of things, society in Wessex having been, one would think, almost reduced to its first elements, Alfred arose and obtained a period of peace for his harassed and dejected countrymen. History tells us how well he wrought to build up in every way the fallen edifice of West-Saxon society. Among his labours not the least meritorious was his translation of Beda's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Pope Gregory's work, *De Cura Pastorali*, the famous treatise of Boethius *De Consolatione*, and

the *Universal History* of Orosius. Yet, in spite of his generous efforts, the evils caused by the Danes could not be repaired. A sort of blight seemed to have passed over the Anglo-Saxon genius. Now and then a great man appeared, endowed with a reparative force, and with a courage which aimed at raising the fallen spirit of the people. Such a man was St. Dunstan, who was ever faithful to the interests of learning. But his work was undone during the disastrous reign of Æthelred the Unready, at the end of which the Danish power established itself in England. Under Edward the Confessor, French influences began to be greatly felt. The two races of the Teutonic north had torn each other to pieces, and the culture which Saxon had been able to impart to Northman was not sufficient to discipline him into a truly civilised man. England, though at a terrible cost, had to be knit on to the state-system of Southern Europe; her anarchy must give place to centralisation; her schools, and her art, and her architecture be remodelled by Italians and Frenchmen; her poets turn their eyes, not towards Iceland, but towards Normandy or Provence.

NORTHUMBRIA

Turning now to the other literary centre, the Northumbrian kingdom, we find that impulse and initiation were due to more than one source. In the main, the conversion of the Angles north of the Tees, and the implantation among them of the germs of culture, are traceable to Iona, and, indirectly, to the Irish church and St. Patrick. From Ireland, in the persons of St. Columba and his followers, was wafted a ministry of light and civilisation, which from the sixth to the eleventh century diffused its blessings over northern Europe. Oswald, son of the Bernician king Æthelfrith, embraced Christianity through the teaching of the monks of Iona, and when he became king of Bernicia in 634, one of his first thoughts was to send to his old teachers and ask that missionaries might be sent to instruct his people. Aidan accordingly came from Iona and founded a bishop's see at Lindisfarne, or Holy Isle.

Adamnan, abbot of Iona about the year 690, has a peculiar interest, because a long extract from his work on the holy places is incorporated by Beda in his *Ecclesiastical History*. He also wrote a life of his founder, St. Columba. To the encouragement of Bishop Aidan we owe it that Hilda, a lady of the royal house of Deira, established monasteries at Hartlepool and Streoneshalch (afterwards Whitby); and it was by the monks of Streoneshalch that the seed was sown, which, falling upon a good heart and a capacious brain, bore fruit in the poetry of Cædmon, the earliest English poet. We need not repeat the well-known story of the vision, in which the destined bard, then a humble menial employed about the stables and boat-service of the monastery, believed that an injunction of more than mortal authority was laid upon him, to "sing of the beginning of creation." The impulse having been once communicated, Cædmon, as Beda informs us, continued for a long time to clothe in his native measures the principal religious facts recorded in the Pentateuch and in the New Testament. Hitherto the influences in Northumbria tending to culture have been found to be only indirectly Roman; the immediate source of them was Iona. But when we come to the Venerable Beda, the great light of the Northumbrian church, the glory of letters in a rude and turbulent age, nay, even the teacher and the beacon light of all Europe for the period from the seventh to the tenth century, we find that the fountain whence he drew the streams of thought and knowledge came

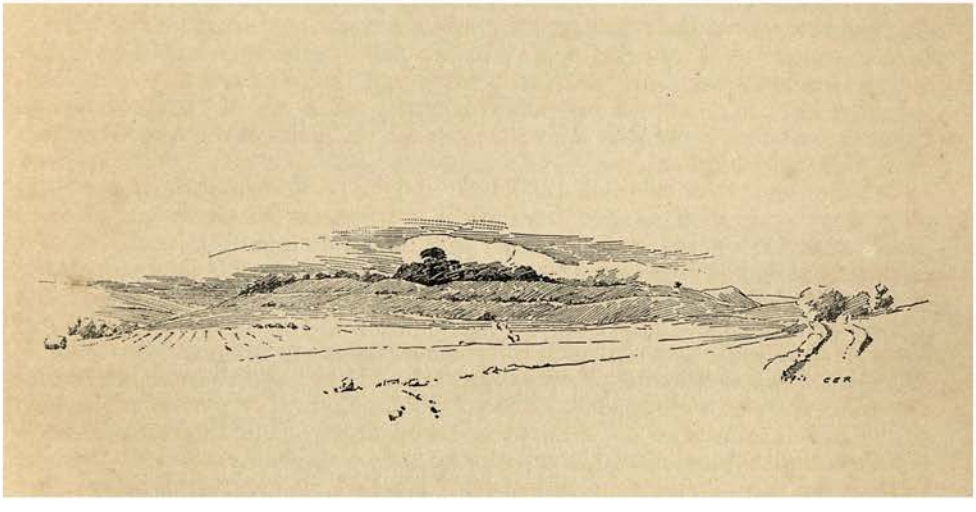
from no derivative source, but was supplied directly from Rome, the well-head of Christian culture. When only seven years old, Beda, like Orderic in a later age, was brought by his father to Jarrow and given up to the abbot to be trained to monastic life. The rest of his life, down to the year 731, was passed in the monastery, as we know from his own statement; in 735 he died. His works may be grouped under five heads: 1, Educational; 2, Theological; 3, Historical; 4, Poetical; 5, Letters. To the first class belong the treatises *De Orthographia* and *de Arte Metrica*, the first being a short dictionary; the second a prosody, describing the principal classical metres, with examples. *De Natura Rerum* is a cosmogony and cosmography, with numerous diagrams and maps. Under the second head, that of theological works, fall his *Expositiones* on St. Mark's and St. Luke's Gospels, on the Acts, and other books of the New Testament, his homilies, forty-nine in number, and a book of prayers, chiefly made up of verses taken from the Psalms.

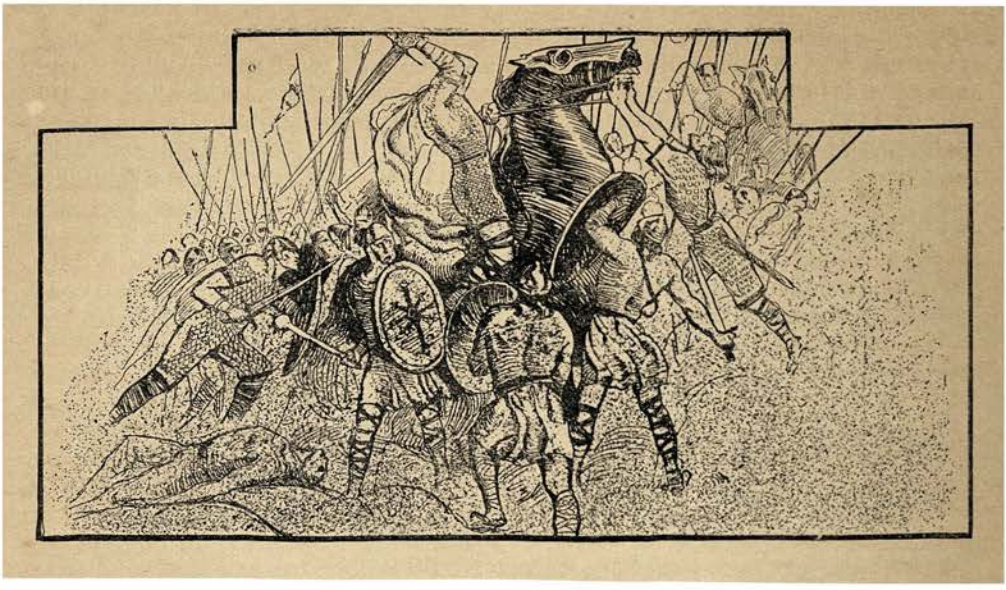
The *Ecclesiastical History*, his greatest work, opens with a preface, in which, in that tone of calmness and mild dignity which go far to make a perfect prose style, Beda explains in detail the nature and the sources of the evidence on which he has relied in compiling the work. A short introduction then sketches the general history of Britain from the landing of Julius Cæsar to the coming of Augustine. From the landing of Augustine in 596 to the year 731, the progress of Christianity, the successes and the reverses of the church in the arduous work of bringing within her pale the fiercely warring nations of the Anglo-Saxons, are narrated, fully but unsystematically, for each kingdom in turn. Among his poetical works are a life of St. Cuthbert in Latin hexameters, a number of hymns, a poem on Justin Martyr, and another on the Day of Judgment.

At the time when Beda died (735) the Angles of Northumbria were beginning to lay aside their arms and zealously to frequent the monastery schools. But a reaction set in; and after the middle of the century Northumbrian history is darkened by the frequent record of dissension among the members of the royal house, civil war, and assassination. At the monastery of York Alcuin was educated, and when grown up he had charge of its school and library. In 780 he was sent on a mission to Rome; on his return, at Parma, he fell in with the emperor Charlemagne, who invited him to settle at Aix-la-Chapelle, at that time the chief imperial residence, to teach his children, and aid in the organisation of education throughout his dominions. Having obtained the permission of his superiors at York, Alcuin complied with the request; and from that time to his death, in 804, resided, with little intermission, either at the imperial court or at Tours. Alcuin's letters, though the good man was of a somewhat dry and pedantic turn, contain much matter of interest. His extant works are of considerable bulk; they are chiefly educational and theological treatises, which for lack of vigour or originality of treatment have fallen into complete oblivion.

After the death of Alcuin the confusion in Northumbria became ever worse and worse. But for the *Durham Gospels*, a version in the Angle dialect of the four gospels, and a few similar remains, the north of England presents a dead blank to the historian of literature from Alcuin to Simeon of Durham, a period of more than three hundred years. In the south the intellectual atmosphere was far less dark. The works of Ælfric, who died archbishop of Canterbury in 1006, are chiefly interesting because they show the growing importance of the native language. Ælfric's *Homilies* are in Anglo-Saxon; his *Colloquy* is a conversation on common things, in Latin and Anglo-Saxon, between a master and his scholar. The annals of public events, to which, as

collected and arranged by Archbishop Plegmund at the end of the ninth century, we give the name of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, continued to be recorded at Canterbury in the native language till about the date of the Conquest; after that time the task passed into the hands of the monks of Peterborough, and was carried on by them for nearly a hundred years. Had there been no violent change, England would by slow degrees have got through with the task of assimilating and taming the Northmen, and, in spite of physical isolation, would have participated, though probably lagging far behind the rest, in the general intellectual advance of the nations of Europe. For good or for evil, the process of national and also of intellectual development was to be altered and quickened by the arrival of a knightly race of conquerors from across the Channel.[bb]





CHAPTER V

THE NORMAN CONQUEST

[1066–1087 A.D.]

THE Norman Conquest is the great turning-point in the history of the English nation. And yet there is no event whose true nature has been more commonly and more utterly mistaken. No event is less fitted to be taken, as it so often has been taken, for the beginning of our national history. The Norman Conquest brought with it a most extensive foreign infusion which affected our blood, our language, our laws, our arts; still it was only an infusion; the older and stronger elements still survived, and in the long run they again made good their supremacy. In a few generations we led captive our conquerors, England was England once again, and the descendants of the Norman invaders were found to be among the truest of Englishmen. England may be as justly proud of rearing such step-children as Simon de Montfort and Edward the First as of being the natural mother of Alfred and Harold.—FREEMAN.[b]

THE first feelings of the Normans after the battle of Hastings seem to have been sensations of triumph and joy, amounting almost to a delirium. They are represented by a contemporary as making their horses to prance and bound over the thickly strewed bodies of the Anglo-Saxons; after which they proceeded to rifle them, and despoil them of their clothes. By William's orders the space was cleared round the pope's standard, which he had set up; and there his tent was pitched, and he feasted with his followers amongst the dead. The critical circumstances in which he had so recently been placed, and the difficulties which still lay before him, disposed the mind of the Conqueror to serious thoughts. Not less, perhaps, in gratitude for the past than in the hope that such a work would procure him heavenly favour for the future, he solemnly vowed that he would erect a splendid abbey on the scene of this his first victory; and when, in process of time, this vow was accomplished,

[1066 A.D.]

the high altar of the abbey church stood on the very spot where the standard of Harold had been planted and thrown down. In the archives of the house was deposited a long roll, on which were inscribed the names of the nobles and gentlemen of mark who came with the Conqueror and survived the battle of Hastings.

The most sanguine of the Normans, in common with the most despondent among the English, expected that, immediately after the battle of Hastings, the Conqueror would march straight to London and make himself master of that capital. But the first move was a retrograde one; nor did William establish himself in the capital until more than two months had passed. While the army of Harold kept the field at Senlac or Battle, several new ships, with reinforcements, came over from Normandy to join William. Mistaking the proper place for landing, the commanders of these vessels put in to Romney, where they were at once assaulted and beaten by the people of the coast. William learned this unpleasant news the day after his victory, and to save the other recruits, whom he still expected, from a similar disaster, he resolved, before proceeding farther, to make himself master of all the south-eastern coast. He turned back, therefore, from Battle to Hastings, at which latter place he stayed some days, awaiting his transports from beyond sea, and hoping, it is said, that his presence would induce the population of those parts to make voluntary submission. At length, seeing that no one came to ask for peace, William resumed his march with the remnant of his army, and the fresh troops which had arrived in the interval from Normandy. He kept close to the seacoast, marching from south to north, and spreading devastation on his passage. He took a savage vengeance at Romney for the reverse his troops had sustained there, by massacring the inhabitants and burning their houses.

From Romney he advanced to Dover, the strongest place on the coast. With little or no opposition, he burst into the town, which his troops set fire to; and the strong castle, which the son of Godwin had put into an excellent state of defence, was so speedily surrendered to him, that a suspicion of treachery rests on the Saxon commander. The capture of this fortress was most opportune and important, for a dreadful dysentery had broken out in the Norman army, and a safe receptacle for the sick had become indispensable. Dover Castle also commanded the best landing-place for troops from the Continent, and William was not yet so sure of his game as not to look anxiously for a place of retreat on the coast, in case of meeting with reverses in the interior. He spent eight or nine days in strengthening the castle, and repairing some of the damage done to the town by his lawless soldiery.

When the Conqueror at last moved from Dover, he marched direct to London. A confused story is told by some of our early historians about a popular resistance, organised by Archbishop Stigand, and the abbot Egelnoth, in which the men of Kent, advancing like the army of Macduff and Siward against Macbeth, under the cover of cut-down trees and boughs, disputed the passage of the Normans, and, with arms in their hands, exacted from them terms most favourable to themselves and the part of England they occupied. But the plain truth seems to be that, overawed by the recent catastrophe of Hastings, and the presence of a compact and numerous army, the inhabitants of Kent made no resistance, and meeting William with offers of submission, placed hostages in his hands, and so obtained mild treatment.

During these calamities the Saxon witan had assembled in London, to deliberate and provide for the future; but evidently, as far as the lay portion of the meeting was concerned, with no intention of submitting to the Con-

queror. The first care that occupied their thoughts was to elect a successor to the throne. Either of Harold's brave brothers, at such a crisis, when valour and military skill were the qualities most wanted, might probably have commanded a majority of suffrages; but they had both fought their last fight; and, owing to their youth, their inexperience, their want of popularity, or to some other circumstance, the two sons of Harold seem never to have been thought of. Many voices would have supported Morcar or Edwin, the powerful brothers-in-law of Harold, who had already an almost sovereign authority in Northumbria and Mercia; but the citizens of London, and the men of the south of England generally, preferred young Eadgar Ætheling, the grandson of Eadmund Ironside, who had been previously set aside on account of his little worth: and when Stigand the primate, and Ealdred (Aldred) the archbishop of York, threw their weight into this scale, Eadgar was proclaimed king. It should seem, however, that even at this stage many of the bishops and clergymen, who were even then Frenchmen or Normans, raised their voice in favour of William, or let fall hints that were all meant to favour his pretensions. The pope's bull and banner could not be without their effect, and, motives of interest and policy apart, some of these ecclesiastics may have conscientiously believed they were performing their duty in promoting the cause of the elect of Rome. Others there were who were notoriously bought over, either by money paid beforehand, or by promises of future largesse.

The party that ultimately prevailed in the witan did not carry their point until much precious time had been consumed; nor could the blood of Cerdic, Alfred, and Eadmund make the king of their choice that rallying point which conflicting factions required, or a hero capable of facing a victorious invader, advancing at the head of a more powerful army than England could hope to raise for some time. In fact, Eadgar was a mere cipher—a boy incapable of government as of war—with nothing popular about him except his descent. The primate Stigand took his place at the council board, and the military command was given to earls Edwin and Morcar.

WILLIAM BEFORE LONDON

Very few acts of legal authority had been performed in the name of Eadgar, when William of Normandy appeared before the southern suburb of London. If the Normans had expected to take the capital by a *coup-de-main*, and at once, they were disappointed; the Londoners were very warlike; and the population of the city, great even in those days, was much increased by the presence of the thanes and chiefs of all the neighbouring counties, who had come in to attend the witan, and had brought their servants and followers with them. After making a successful charge, with five hundred of his best horse, against some citizens who were gathered on that side of the river, William set fire to Southwark, and marched away from London, with the determination of ravaging the country around it, and, by interrupting all communication, inducing the well-defended capital to surrender. Detachments of his army were soon spread over a wide tract; and in burning towns and villages, in the massacre of men armed and men unarmed, and in the violation of helpless females, the people of Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire, and Berkshire were made to feel the full signification of a Norman conquest. William crossed the Thames at Wallingford, near to which place he established an intrenched camp, where a division of his army was left, in order to cut off any succours that might be sent towards London from the west.

[1066 A.D.]

This done, he proceeded across Buckinghamshire into Hertfordshire, "slaying the people," till he came to Berkhampstead, where he took up a position, in order to interrupt all communication with London from the north. The capital, indeed, at this time seems to have been girded round by the enemy, and afflicted by the prospect of absolute famine. Nor were there wanting other causes of discouragement. The earls Edwin and Morcar showed little zeal in the command of a weak, and, as yet, unorganised army, and soon withdrew towards the Humber, taking with them all the soldiers of Northumbria and Mercia, who constituted the best part of King Eadgar's forces, but who looked to the earls much more than to the king. These two sons of Ælfgar probably hoped to be able to maintain themselves in independence in the north, where, in reality, they at a later period renewed and greatly prolonged the contest with the Normans.[1] Their departure had a baneful effect in London; and while the spirit of the citizens waxed fainter and fainter, the partisans and intriguers for William, encouraged at every move by the prevalent faction among the clergy, raised their hopes and extended their exertions.

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR
(From an ancient coin)

After some time, however, earls Morcar and Edwin appear to have returned to the capital. On many an intermediate step the chroniclers are provokingly silent: but at last it was determined that a submissive deputation should be sent from London to Berkhampstead; and King Eadgar himself, the primate Stigand, Ealdred, archbishop of York, Wulfstan, bishop of Worcester, with other prelates and lay chiefs, among whom the Saxon chronicler expressly names the two earls of Northumbria and Mercia, and many of the principal citizens, repaired to William, who received them with an outward show of moderation and kindness. It is related that when the man whom he most hated, as the friend of Harold and the energetic enemy of the Normans—that when Stigand came into his presence, he saluted him with the endearing epithets of father and bishop. The puppet-king Eadgar made a verbal renunciation of the throne, and the rest swore allegiance to the Conqueror—the bishops swearing for the whole body of the clergy, the chiefs for the nobility, and the citizens for the good city of London.

[[1] The attitude of the two grandsons of Leofric, who of all the men of England could have organised and directed anything like an effective opposition to William, has been the subject of much controversy. The chroniclers are at variance in their accounts, and whether the brothers retired from London, cutting themselves off from all communication with their countrymen, or whether they simply withdrew temporarily because of disgust or pique cannot be determined. "On the part of these young men," says Ramsay, *i* "a certain jealousy of Harold and his family might be excused. We could understand their objecting to the promotion of one of Harold's sons. But for opposition to a return to the national dynasty, no apology can be offered. However weak Eadgar may have seemed, union of forces offered the only prospect of escape from ruin. The retirement of the two earls—if they did retire—was simply an act of suicidal treason."]

During a part of this singular audience William pretended to have doubts and misgivings as to the propriety of his ascending the vacant throne; but these hypocritical expressions were drowned in the loud acclamations of his Norman barons, who felt that the crown of England was on the point of their swords. Having taken oaths of fidelity and peace, the Saxon deputies left hostages with the Norman, who, on his side, promised to be mild and merciful to all men. On the following morning the foreigners began their march towards London, plundering, murdering, and burning, just as before. Even now William did not enter London in person, but, sending on part of his army to build a fortress for his reception, he encamped with the rest at some distance from the city. This fortress, which was built on the site, and probably included part of a Roman castle, grew gradually, in after times, into the Tower of London.

WILLIAM'S CORONATION; HIS CONCILIATORY POLICY

As soon as the Normans had finished his stronghold, William took possession of it, and then they fixed his coronation for a few days after. The Conqueror is said to have objected to the performance of this ceremony while so large a part of the island was independent of his authority; and he certainly hoped, by delaying it, to obtain a more formal consent from the English nation, or something like a Saxon election, which would be a better title in the eyes of the people than the right of conquest. Little, however, was gained by delay; and the coronation, which, for the sake of greater solemnity, took place on Christmas Day, was accompanied by accidents and circumstances highly irritating to the people. It is stated, on one side, that William invited the primate Stigand to perform the rites, and that Stigand refused to crown a man "covered with the blood of men, and the invader of others' rights." Although there might have been some policy in making this great champion of the Saxon cause hallow the Conqueror, it does not appear probable that William would ask this service of one who was lying under the severe displeasure of Rome; and it is said, on the other side, that he refused to be consecrated by Stigand, and conferred that honour on Ealdred, archbishop of York.

The new abbey of Westminster, the last work of Edward the Confessor, was chosen as the place for the coronation of England's first Norman king. The suburbs, the streets of London, and all the approaches to the abbey were lined with double rows of soldiers, horse and foot. The Conqueror rode through the ranks, and entered the abbey church, attended by 260 of his warlike chiefs, by many priests and monks, and a considerable number of English, who had been gained over to act a part in the pageantry. At the opening of the ceremony one of William's prelates, Geoffrey, the bishop of Coutances, asked the Normans, in the French language, if they were of opinion that their chief should take the title of king of England; and then the archbishop of York asked the English if they would have William the Norman for their king. The reply on either side was given by acclamation in the affirmative, and the shouts and cheers thus raised were so loud that they startled the foreign cavalry stationed round the abbey. The troops took the confused noise for a cry of alarm raised by their friends, and, as they had received orders to be on the alert, and ready to act in case of any seditious movement, they rushed to the English houses nearest the abbey and set fire to them all. A few, thinking to succour their betrayed duke and the nobles they served,

[1066-1067 A.D.]

ran to the church, where, at sight of their naked swords, and the smoke and flames that were rising, the tumult soon became as great as that without its walls. The Normans fancied the whole population of London and its neighbourhood had risen against them; the English imagined that they had been duped by a vain show, and drawn together, unarmed and defenceless, that they might be massacred. Both parties ran out of the abbey, and the ceremony was interrupted, though William, left almost alone in the church, or with none but the archbishop Ealdred, and some terrified priests of both nations near him at the altar, decidedly refused to postpone the celebration. The service was therefore completed amidst these bad auguries, but in the utmost hurry and confusion; and the Conqueror took the usual coronation oath of the Anglo-Saxon kings, making, as an addition of his own, the solemn promise that he would treat the English people as well as the best of their kings had done.

Meanwhile the commotion without continued, and it is not mentioned at what hour of the day or night the conflagration ended. The English, who had been at the abbey, ran to extinguish the fire—the Normans, it is said, to plunder, and otherwise profit by the disorder; but it appears that some of the latter exerted themselves to stop the progress of the flames, and to put an end to a riot peculiarly unpalatable to their master, whose anxious wish was certainly, at that time, to conciliate the two nations.

Soon after his coronation William withdrew from London to Barking, where he established a court, which gradually attracted many of the nobles of the south of England. Eadric, surnamed the Forester, Coxo, a warrior of high repute, and others are named; and, as William extended his authority, even the thanes and the great earls from the north, where the force of his arms was not yet felt, repaired to do him homage. In return William granted them the confirmation of their estates and honours, which he had not at present the power to seize or invade. It appears that the Conqueror's first seizures and confiscations, after the crown lands, were the domains of Harold, and his brothers Gurth and Leofwine, and the lands and property of such of the English chiefs as were either very weak, or unpopular, or indifferent to the nation.

Eadgar Ætheling was an inmate of the new court, and William, knowing he was cherished by many of the English on account of his descent, pretended to treat him with great respect, and left him the earldom of Oxford, which Harold had conferred on him when he ascended the throne in his stead. From Barking the new king made a progress through the territory, that was rather militarily occupied than securely conquered, displaying as he went as much royal pomp, and treating the English with as much courtesy and consideration, as he could. The extent of this territory cannot be exactly determined, but it appears the Conqueror had not yet advanced, in the northeast beyond the confines of Norfolk, nor in the southwest beyond Dorsetshire. Both on the eastern and western coast, and in the midland counties, the invasion was gradual and slow.

All William's measures at this time were mild and conciliating; he respected the old Anglo-Saxon laws; he established good courts of justice, encouraged agriculture and commerce, and (at least nominally) enlarged the privileges of London and some other towns. At the same time, however, the country he held was bristled with castles and towers; and additional fortresses erected in and around the capital, showed his distrust of what was termed, in the language of the Normans, an over-numerous and too proud population. Such operations could not be otherwise than distasteful to the English, who

were further irritated by seeing proud foreign lords fixed among them, and married to the widows and heiresses of their old lords, who had fallen at Hastings. The rapacious followers of William were hard to satisfy; and, to secure their attachment, he was frequently obliged to go beyond those bounds of moderation he was inclined to set for himself. A most numerous troop of priests and monks had come over from the Continent, and their avidity was scarcely inferior to that of the barons and knights. Nearly every one of them wanted a church, a rich abbey, or some higher promotion. It was, however, to these foreign churchmen that our country was chiefly indebted for whatever intellectual improvement or civilisation was imported at the Conquest.

THE REGENCY OF ODO

In the month of March, 1067, the English in the north and west being yet untouched, William resolved to pass over into Normandy. Had he determined to vex and rouse the English, he could scarcely have left a more fitting instrument than his half-brother Odo, to whom he confided the royal power during his absence. On the other hand, as if to make an English revolt hopeless, should it be attempted, he carried in his train Stigand, the archbishop of Canterbury, Eadgar Ætheling, Edwin, earl of Mercia, Morcar, earl of Northumbria, and many others of high nobility. He set sail with a fair wind for Normandy, just six months after his landing in England.

The rule of Odo and the barons left in England pressed harshly on the people, whose complaints and cries for justice they despised. Without punishment or check, their men-at-arms were permitted to insult and plunder, not merely the peasants and burgesses, but people of the best condition, and the cup of misery and degradation was filled up, as usual in such cases, by violence offered to the women. The English spirit was not yet so depressed, and, in fact, never sank so low as to tolerate such wrongs. Several popular risings took place in various parts of the subjugated territory, and many a Norman, caught beyond the walls of his castle or garrison town, was cut to pieces. These partial insurrections were followed by concerted and extensively combined movements. The men of Kent, who had been the first to submit, were the first to attempt to throw off the yoke.

A singular circumstance attended their effort. Eustace, count of Boulogne, the same who had caused such a stir at Dover in the time of Edward the Confessor, was then in open quarrel with William the Norman, who kept one of his sons in prison. Forgetting their old grievances, the people of Kent sent a message to Count Eustace, promising to put Dover into his hands if he would help them wage war on their Norman oppressors. Eustace accepted the invitation, and, crossing the Channel with a small band, he landed, under favour of a dark night, at a short distance from Dover, where he was presently joined by a host of Kentish men in arms. A contemporary says that had they waited but two days, these insurgents would have been joined by the whole population of those parts; but they imprudently made an attack on the strong castle of Dover, were repulsed with loss, and then thrown into a panic, by the false report that Bishop Odo was approaching them with all his forces. Count Eustace fled, and got safely on board ship, but most of his men-at-arms were slain or taken prisoners by the Norman garrison, or broke their necks by falling over the cliffs on which Dover Castle stands. The men of Kent, with a few exceptions, found their way home in safety, by taking by-paths and roads with which the Normans were unacquainted.

[1067–1068 A.D.]

In the west Eadric the Forester, the lord of extensive possessions that lay on the Severn and the confines of Wales, being provoked at the depredations committed by some Norman captains who had garrisoned the city of Hereford, took up arms, and forming an alliance with two Welsh princes, he was enabled to shut the foreigners close up within the walls of the town, and to range undisputed master of all the western part of Herefordshire.

At this favourable moment the two sons of King Harold sailed over from Ireland with a considerable force, embarked in sixty ships. They ascended the Bristol Channel and the river Avon, and, landing near Bristol, plundered that fertile country. Whatever were their pretexts and claims, they acted as common enemies, and were met as such by the English people, who repulsed them when they attempted to take the city of Bristol, and soon after defeated them upon the coast of Somersetshire, whither they had repaired with their ships and plunder. The invaders, who suffered severely, took to their ships, and returned immediately to Ireland. In Shropshire, Nottinghamshire, and other parts of the kingdom, bodies of English rose in arms, and urged their neighbours to join them. Rumours spread that a simultaneous massacre, like that perpetrated on the Danes, was intended.

THE RETURN OF WILLIAM

Letter after letter, and message after message, were sent in to Normandy; but the Conqueror lingered there for more than eight months. When at last he departed, it was in hurry and agitation. He embarked at Dieppe on the 6th of December, and sailed for England by night. On arriving, he placed new governors, whom he had brought from Normandy, in his castles and strongholds in Sussex and Kent. On reaching London he was made fully sensible of the prevailing discontent; but with his usual crafty prudence he applied himself to soothe the storm for a while, deeming that the time had not yet arrived for his openly declaring that the fickle, faithless English were to be exterminated, or treated as slaves, and all their possessions and honours given to the Normans. He celebrated the festival of Christmas with unusual pomp, and invited many Saxon chiefs to London to partake in the celebration. He received these guests with smiles and caresses, giving the kiss of welcome to every comer. If they asked for anything, he granted it; if they announced or advised anything, he listened with respectful attention; and it should seem that they were nearly all the dupes of these royal artifices. He then propitiated the citizens of London by a proclamation, which was written in the Saxon language, and read in all the churches of the capital. "Be it known unto you," said this document, "what is my will. I will that all of you enjoy your national laws as in the days of King Edward; that every son shall inherit from his father, after the days of his father; and that none of my people do you wrong." William's first public act after all these promises was to impose a heavy tax, which was made more and more burdensome as his power increased.

The Conqueror's second campaign in England (1068) opened in the fertile province of Devonshire, where the people refused to acknowledge his government, and prepared to resist the advance of his lieutenants. Some of the thanes to whom the command of the insurrection had been intrusted proved cowards or traitors; the Normans advanced, burning, and destroying, and breathing vengeance; but the men of Exeter, who had had a principal share in organising the patriotic resistance, were resolute in the defence of their city.

Githa, Harold's mother, had fled there after the battle of Hastings, and carried with her considerable riches. When the Conqueror came within four miles of Exeter, he summoned the citizens to submit, and take the oath of fealty. They replied, "We will not swear fealty to this man, who pretends to be our king, nor will we receive his garrison within our walls; but if he will receive as tribute the dues we were accustomed to pay to our kings, we will consent to pay them to him."

To this somewhat novel proposal William said, "I would have subjects, and it is not my custom to take them on such conditions." Some of the magistrates and wealthiest of the citizens then went to William, and, imploring his mercy, proffered the submission of the city, and gave hostages; but the mass of the population either did not sanction this proceeding, or repented of it; and when William rode up at the head of his cavalry, he found the gates barred and the walls manned with combatants, who bade him defiance. The Normans, in sight of the men on the ramparts, then tore out the eyes of one of the hostages they had just received; but this savage act did not daunt the people, who were well prepared for defence, having raised new turrets and battlements on the walls, and brought in a number of armed seamen both native and foreigners, that happened to be in their port. The siege continued for eighteen days, and cost William a great number of men. The brave men of Exeter, however, obtained much more favourable terms than were then usual; for, though they were forced to take the oath, and admit a Norman garrison, their lives, property, and privileges were secured to them, and successful precautions were taken by the Conqueror to prevent any outrage or plunder. William returned to Winchester, where he was joined by his wife Matilda, who had not hitherto been in England. At the ensuing festival of Whitsuntide she was publicly crowned by Eadred, the archbishop of York. On the surrender of Exeter, the aged Githa, with several ladies of rank, escaped to Bath, and finding no safety there, they fled to the small islands at the mouth of the Severn, where they lay concealed until they found an opportunity of passing over to Flanders.

Harold's sons, Godwine and Eadmund, with a younger brother named Magnus, again came over from Ireland, and with a fleet hovered off the coast of Devonshire and Cornwall, landing occasionally, and inviting the people to join them against the Normans. Nothing could be more absurdly concerted than these movements. Having rashly ventured too far into the country, they were suddenly attacked by a Norman force from Exeter, and defeated with great slaughter. Their means were now exhausted, and, wearied by their ill success, their Irish allies declined giving any further assistance to these exiles. The sons of Harold next appeared as suppliants at the court of Svend, king of Denmark.

During the spring and early summer of this same year (1068), William established his authority in Devonshire, Somersetshire, and Gloucestershire, and besides taking Exeter, made himself master of Oxford and other fortified cities which he had left in his rear when he advanced into the west. Wherever his dominion was imposed, the mass of land was given to his lords and knights, and fortresses and castles were erected and garrisoned by Normans and other foreigners, who continued to cross the Channel in search of employment, wealth, and honours. Meanwhile, the accounts of the sufferings of the conquered people, as given by the native chroniclers, are thus condensed in a striking passage of Holinshed:[h]

"He took away from divers of the nobility, and others of the better sort, all their livings, and gave the same to his Normans. Moreover, he raised

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great taxes and subsidies through the realm; nor anything regarded the English nobility; so that they who before thought themselves to be made forever by bringing a stranger into the realm, did now see themselves trodden under foot, to be despised, and to be mocked on all sides, insomuch that many of them were constrained (as it were, for a further testimony of servitude and bondage) to shave their beards, to round their hair, and to frame themselves, as well in apparel as in service and diet, at their tables, after the Norman manner, very strange and far differing from the ancient customs and old usages of their country. Others, utterly refusing to sustain such an intolerable yoke of thraldom as was daily laid upon them by the Normans, chose rather to leave all, both goods and lands, and, after the manner of outlaws, got them to the woods with their wives, children, and servants, meaning from thenceforth to live upon the spoil of the country adjoining, and to take whatsoever came next to hand. Whereupon it came to pass within a while that no man might travel in safety from his own house or town to his next neighbours." The bands of outlaws thus formed of impoverished, desperate men, were not suppressed for several successive reigns; and while the Normans considered and treated them as banditti, the English people long regarded them in the light of unfortunate patriots.

Men of higher rank and more extended views were soon among the fugitives from the pale of the Conqueror. When in his conciliating mood, William had promised Edwin, earl of Mercia, one of his daughters in marriage; and, flattered by the prospect of such a prize, this powerful brother-in-law of Harold had rendered important services to the Norman cause; but now, when he asked his reward, the Conqueror not only refused the fair bride, but insulted the suitor. Upon this, Edwin, with his brother Morcar, went to the north of England, there to join their incensed countrymen, and make one general effort for the recovery of their ancient liberties. No foreign soldier had as yet passed the Humber; and it was behind that river that Edwin and Morcar fixed the great camp of independence, the most southern bulwark of which was the fortified city of York. Among the men of Yorkshire and Northumbria they found some thousands of hardy warriors, who swore they would not sleep under the roof of a house till the day of victory, and they were joined by some allies from the mountains of Wales and other parts.

The ever-active Conqueror, however, came upon them before they were prepared. His march, considering the many obstacles he had to overcome, was wonderfully rapid. Advancing from Oxford, he took Warwick and Leicester, the latter of which places he almost entirely destroyed. Then, crossing the Trent, which he had not seen till now, he fell upon Derby and Nottingham. From Nottingham he marched upon Lincoln, which he forced to capitulate and deliver hostages, and thence pressing forward might and main, he came to the river Ouse, near the point where it falls into the Humber. Here he found Edwin and Morcar drawn up to oppose him.[d]

But William gained his point without having to fight a pitched battle. Edwin and Morcar were pacified by promises and submitted without striking a blow. But, as Freeman says, the favour at William's hands to which they were now admitted was a favour only in name. William continued to advance after the submission of the earls practically unopposed. The English fled from every town. As he approached York, a deputation of its citizens met him with the keys of the city. The more resolute of the English collected at Durham; others fled into the country of the Scots which became the refuge for thousands of English patriots.[a] The Normans who were

not prepared to advance farther, built a strong citadel at York, which became their advanced post and bulwark towards the north.

In spite of his successes in the north, and his firm establishment in the midland counties, where he built castles and gave away earldoms, the Conqueror's throne was still threatened, and the country still agitated from one end to the other. The English chiefs, who had hitherto adhered to his cause, fell off, at first one by one, and then in troops together, following up their defection with concerted plans of operation against him. To these was added a fugitive of still higher rank, of whose custody the Conqueror was very negligent. Eadgar Ætheling fled by sea into Scotland, taking his mother, Agatha, and his two sisters, Margaret and Christina, with him. These royal fugitives were received with great honour and kindness, and conducted to his castle of Dunfermline by the Scottish monarch, Malcolm Canmore. Eadgar's sister Margaret was young and handsome; "and in process of time the said King Malcolm cast such love unto the said Margaret, that he took her to wife." Some of the English nobles had preceded Eadgar to Scotland; many followed him; and these emigrants, and others that arrived from the same quarter on various subsequent occasions, became the founders of a principal part of the Scottish nobility.

It is probable that William did not mourn much for the departure of the English thanes; but presently he was vexed and embarrassed by the departure of some of his Norman chiefs who had followed him from the Continent. The king punished this desertion by immediately confiscating all the possessions they had obtained in England. At the same time he invited fresh adventurers and soldiers of fortune from nearly every country in Europe; and, allured by his brilliant offers, bands flocked to him from the banks of the Rhine, the Seine, the Loire, the Garonne, and the Tagus—from the Alps, and the Italian peninsula beyond the Alps.

The strong garrison which the Conqueror had left at York could scarcely adventure a mile in advance of that post without being attacked by the natives, who lay constantly in ambush in all the woods and glens. The governor, William Malet, was soon fain to declare that he would not answer for the security of York itself unless prompt succour was sent him. On receiving this alarming news, William marched in person, and arrived before York just as the citizens, in league with all the country people of the neighbourhood, were besieging the Norman fortress. Having raised this siege by a sudden attack, he laid the foundations of a second castle in York, and, leaving a double garrison, returned southward. Soon after his departure, the English made a second attempt to drive the enemy from their fortress, but they were repulsed with loss; and the second castle and other works were finished without further interruption. Thinking themselves now secure in this advanced post, the Normans resumed the offensive, and made a desperate attempt to extend their frontier as far north as Durham. The advance was made by a certain Robert de Comines, to whom William had promised a vast territory yet to be conquered.

This Robert set out from York with much pomp and circumstance, having assumed, by anticipation, the title of earl of Northumberland. His army was not large, consisting only of 1,200 lances; but his confidence was boundless. He crossed the Tees, and was within sight of the walls of Durham, which the Normans called "the stronghold of the rebels of the north," when Æthelwine, the English bishop of that place, came forth to meet him, and informed him that the natives had vowed to destroy him, or be destroyed, and warned him not to expose himself with so small a force. Comines treated

[1069 A.D.]

the warning with contempt, and marched on. The Normans entered Durham, massacring a few defenceless men. The soldiers quartered themselves in the houses of the citizens, plundering or wasting their substance; and the chief himself took possession of the bishop's palace. But when night fell, the people lighted signal-fires on the hills, that were seen as far as the Tees to the south, and as far northward as the river Tyne; and, at the summons, the inhabitants gathered in great numbers, and hurried to Durham. At the point of day they rushed into the city, and attacked the Normans on all sides. Many were killed before they could well rouse themselves from the deep sleep induced by the fatigue of the preceding day's march, and the revelry and debauch of the night. The rest attempted to rally in the bishop's house, where their leader had established his quarters. They defended this post for a short time, discharging their arrows and other missiles on the heads of their assailants, but the English ended the combat by setting fire to the house, which was burned to the ground, with Robert de Comines and all the Normans in it. The chroniclers relate that of all the men engaged in the expedition only two escaped.

When the Northumbrians struck the blow at Durham, they were expecting powerful allies, who soon arrived. As we have so often had occasion to repeat, these men, with the inhabitants of most of the Danelagh, were exceedingly fierce and warlike, and chiefly of Danish blood. Many of the old men had followed the victorious banner of the great Canute into England, or had served under his sons, kings Harold Harefoot and Harthacnut; and the sons of these old warriors were now in the vigour of mature manhood. They had always maintained an intercourse with Denmark, and as soon as they saw themselves threatened by the Normans, they applied to that country for assistance. The court of the Danish king was soon crowded by supplicants from the Danelagh, from Norwich and Lincoln, to York, Durham, and Newcastle. There were also envoys from other parts of the kingdom, where the Saxon blood predominated, and the sons of King Harold added their efforts to urge the Danish monarch to the invasion of England.

At the same time the men of Northumberland had opened a correspondence with Malcolm Canmore and his guest Eadgar Ætheling, and allied themselves with the English refugees in Scotland and on the Border. Even supposing that the sons of Harold made no pretensions to the crown, there must have been some jealousy and confusion in this confederacy; for while one party to it held the weak Eadgar as legitimate sovereign, another maintained that by right of succession the king of Denmark was king of England. It seems well established that the Danish monarch, Svend Estridsen (Estrithson), held the latter opinion; and the ill success of the confederacy may probably be attributed to the disunion inevitably arising from such clashing interests and pretensions. As soon as the battle of Hastings was known, and before any invitations were sent over, Svend had contemplated a descent on England. To avert this danger, William had recourse to Adelbert, the archbishop of Bremen, who, won by persuasion and presents of large sums of money, undertook the negotiation, and endeavoured to make the Danish king renounce his project.

Two years passed without anything more being heard of the Danish invasion; but when in this, the third year after the battle of Hastings, the solicitations of the English emigrants were more urgent than ever, and the men of the north, his natural allies, were up in arms, the powerful Dane despatched a fleet of 240 sail, with orders to act in conjunction with the king of Scotland and the Northumbrians. The army embarked in this fleet was composed of

almost as many heterogeneous materials as the mercenary force of William; besides Danes and Holsteiners, there were Frisians, Saxons, Poles, and adventurers from other countries, tempted by the hope of plunder. The Danish king gave the supreme command of the fleet to his brother Asbiorn. After alarming the Normans in the southeast, at Dover, Sandwich, and Ipswich, the Danes went northward to the Humber, and sailed up that estuary to the Ouse, where they landed about the middle of August. It appears that Asbiorn was not able to prevent his motley army from plundering and wasting the country.

As soon, however, as the Anglo-Danes, the men of Yorkshire and Northumberland, were advised of the arrival of the armament, they flocked to join it from all parts of the country; and Eadgar Ætheling, with Marleswine, Gospatrick, Waltheof the son of Siward, the great enemy of Macbeth, and many others, arrived from the frontiers of Scotland, bearing the consoling assurance that, in addition to the force they brought with them, Malcolm Canmore was advancing with a Scottish army to support the insurgents. York was close at hand, and they determined to commence operations by the attack of the Norman fortifications in that city. The Normans had rendered the walls of the town so strong that they defended them seven days; on the eighth day of the siege they set fire to the houses that stood near their citadels, in order that their assailants might not use the materials to fill up the ditches of the castles, and then they shut themselves up within those lines. A strong wind arose—the flames spread in all directions; the minster, or cathedral church, with its famous library, and great part of the city, were consumed; and even within their castles the Normans saw themselves threatened with a horrid death by the fire they had kindled. Preferring death by the sword and battle-axe to being burned alive, they made a sally, and were slain, almost to a man, by an enemy far superior in number, and inflamed with the fiercest hatred.

They had suffered no such loss since the fight of Hastings; three thousand Normans and mercenaries of different races fell; and only William Malet, the governor of York, with his wife and children, and a few other men of rank, were saved and carried on board the Danish fleet, where they were kept for ransom. Such parts of the city of York as escaped the conflagration were occupied by or for Eadgar Ætheling. A rapid advance to the south, after the capture of York, with no enemy in their rear, might have insured the confederates a signal and perhaps a decisive success; but the king of Scotland did not appear with his promised army, and at the approach of winter the Danes retired to their ships in the Humber, or took up quarters between the Ouse and the Trent. William was thus allowed time to collect his forces and bring over fresh troops from the Continent.

THE DEVASTATION OF THE NORTH [1069 A.D.]

The Conqueror was hunting in the forest of Dean when he received the first news of the catastrophe of York; and then and there he swore, by the splendour of the Almighty, that he would utterly exterminate the Northumbrian people, nor ever lay down his lance when he had once taken it up, until he had done the deed.[d]

He had collected about him a new body of auxiliary troops, and he marched to the north with an overwhelming force. But he trusted not to force alone. His agents were busy amongst the Danish chiefs; and their powerful army

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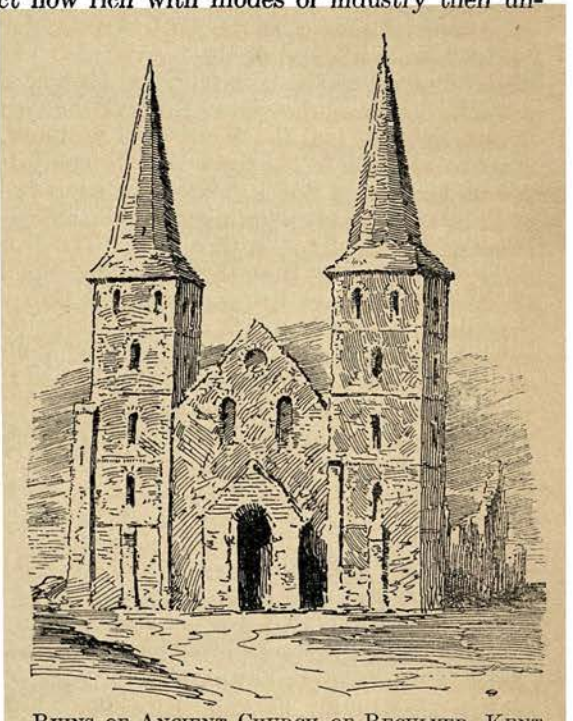
retired to their ships. The English, who had joined the Danes at the Humber, fell back to the Tyne. York was left to be defended by Earl Waltheof alone. The insurrectionary spirit had spread upon the news of the Danish landing, and William had to fight his way through a hostile population in the midland counties. At length he reached Pontefract. The winter was come with rain and snow. The river Aire had become a torrent, and was impassable by boats. Three weeks was the fiery king detained; till at length a ford was found and the army crossed. Their march was through the wild hills and the pathless forests of a district now rich with modes of industry then undreamt of—by paths so narrow that two soldiers could not walk abreast. He entered York, which he found abandoned. But there he sat down, to spend the festival of Christmas in the organisation of a plan of vengeance that would have better fitted one who had never had the name of the great teacher of mercy on his lips. He dispersed his commanders in separate divisions over a surface of a hundred miles, with orders to destroy every living man, and every article that could minister to the sustenance of life. Houses were to be burned; the implements of husbandry were to be broken up; the whole district from the Humber to the Tees, from the Wear to the Tyne, was to be made a desert. And it was made a desert. Throughout this region, when, fourteen years after, the survey recorded in *Doomsday Book* was completed, the lands of Edwin and Morcar were entered as *wasta*—laid waste. Many others belonging to the sees of York and Durham, and to Waltheof, Gospatrick, and Siward, the Saxon lords, had the terrible word *wasta* written against them. Malmesbury,[e] writing half a century afterwards, says: "Thus, the resources of a province, once flourishing, were cut off, by fire, slaughter, and devastation. The ground for more than sixty miles, totally uncultivated and unproductive, remains bare to the present day."



RUINS OF ANCIENT CHURCH OF RECULVER, KENT

Ordericus[g] winds up the lamentable story with these words: "There followed, consequently, so great a scarcity in England in the ensuing years, and severe famine involved the innocent and unarmed population in so much misery, that, in a Christian nation, more than a hundred thousand souls, of both sexes and all ages, perished of want. On many occasions, in the course of the present history, I have been free to extol William according to his merits, but I dare not commend him for an act which levelled both the bad and the good together in one common ruin, by the infliction of a consuming famine. For when I see that innocent children, youths in the prime of their

age, and gray-headed old men perished from hunger, I am more disposed to pity the sorrows and sufferings of the wretched people, than to undertake the hopeless task of screening one by lying flatteries who was guilty of such wholesale massacre. I assert, moreover, that such barbarous homicide could not pass unpunished. The Almighty Judge beholds alike the high and low, scrutinising and punishing the acts of both with equal justice, that his eternal laws may be plain to all."

Detestable as these cruelties appear to us, it is satisfactory to find that they were held in detestation by those who lived near the times in which they were perpetrated. It was not a characteristic of these ages, which we are accustomed to think barbarous, that the monastic writers, who possessed all the knowledge of the period, should speak with indifference of men eating human flesh, under the pressure of famine; of perishing creatures selling themselves into perpetual slavery to obtain food; of corpses rotting in the highways, because none were left to bury them. Nor are we quite warranted in believing that the great Norman chieftains, even whilst they received enormous grants of confiscated properties, could look with unmixed satisfaction upon pasture lands without herds, and arable lands without men to till them.[1]

On his return from Hexham to York, by an imperfectly known and indirect route across the Fells, William was well-nigh perishing. The snow was still deep in those parts, and the rivers, torrents, ravines, and mountains continually presented obstacles to which the Normans had been little accustomed in the level counties of England. The army fell into confusion, the king lost the track, and passed a whole night without knowing where he was, or what direction his troops had taken. He did not reach York without a serious loss, for he left behind him most of his horses, which were said to have perished in the snow; his men also suffered the severest privations.

Confiscation now became almost general. All property in land, whether belonging to patriotic chiefs, or to men who had taken no active part in the conflict, began to pass into the possession of the Normans and other foreigners. Nor was movable property safer or more respected. William's commissioners, who in many places performed their work sword in hand, did not always draw a distinction between the plate and jewels left in deposit, and the treasures that belonged to the monasteries themselves, but carried off the church ornaments, and the vessels of silver or gold that were attached to the service of the altar. They also removed or destroyed all deeds and documents, charters of immunities, and evidences of property. The newly conquered territory in the north was distributed in immense lots. In *Doomsday Book*, which was drawn up fifteen years after the Norman occupation of them, most of these domains are described as lying fallow or waste. Every baron erected his castle; and in every populous town there was a strong fortress, where the Normans confined the principal natives as hostages, and into which they could retire in case of an insurrection.

The nominal government of Northumberland was, however, intrusted to a native who had recently borne arms against William. This was Gospatrick, who came in with Waltheof, the brave son of Siward, with Morcar and Edwin, the brothers-in-law of King Harold, and submitted to William for the second time, being probably induced thereto by liberal promises from the Conqueror, who then considered them as the main prop of the English cause, wanting whom Eadgar Ætheling would at once fall into insignificance. Waltheof was made earl of Huntingdon and Northampton, and received the hand of Judith, one of King William's nieces; and Morcar and Edwin were restored

[1070 A.D.]

to their paternal estates. In reality, however, these four men were little better than prisoners, and three of them perished miserably in a very short time.

The insurrections which broke out in William's rear, during his march to York, were partially suppressed by his lieutenants, who suffered some reverses, and perpetrated great cruelties. The garrison of Exeter, besieged by the people of Cornwall, was relieved by Fitz-Osborne; Montacute (Montague) repulsed the insurgents of Devonshire and Somersetshire; and Eadric the Forester, who took the town of Shrewsbury, with the help of the men of Chester and some Welsh, was foiled in his attempt to reduce the castle. The whole of the northwest was, however, in a very insecure state; and the haste with which William marched thither on his return to York from Hexham, seems to denote some greater peril on the side of the Normans than is expressed by any of the annalists. The weather was still inclement, and his troops were fatigued by their recent exertions, their rapid marches and counter-marches in Northumberland; yet he led them, amidst storms of sleet and hail, across the mountains which divide our island lengthwise, and which have been called, not inappropriately, the Apennines of England. The roads he took, as being those which led direct to Chester, were scarcely passable for cavalry, and his troops were annoyed and disheartened by actual difficulties and prospective hardships and dangers.

THE HOLY WELL IN CRYPT OF CHAPEL OF ST. JOSEPH, GLASTONBURY ABBEY

(Founded in the sixth century. The crypt is of the fifteenth century.)

The auxiliaries, particularly the men of Anjou and Brittany, began to murmur aloud; and not a few of the Normans, complaining of the hard service to which their chief was exposing them, talked of returning beyond sea. William silenced their murmurs with his wonted art; and on the rough way over the wealds he partook in the fatigues of the common soldiers, marching on foot with them, and faring as they fared. Chester, which still retained the outer features of a Roman city, and where the Conqueror gazed on Roman walls and gates then comparatively entire, had not yet been invaded by the Normans. No defence, however, was attempted there; and, after entering in triumph, William proceeded to lay the foundations of a new and strong castle, while detachments of his army reduced the surrounding country. During the Conqueror's stay Eadric the Forester submitted, and was received into favour. To retain the newly conquered province in the northwest, he had left a strong body of troops behind him. Hugh the Wolf and his ferocious followers shed the blood of the Welsh like water. The fearful tragedy of Northumberland and Yorkshire was repeated on a smaller scale in this corner of the island, and famine and pestilence stalked along the banks of the Clwyd, the Dee, and the Mersey, as they had done by the rivers of the northeastern coast.

THE RESISTANCE OF HEREWARD [1071 A.D.]

The disturbances on the eastern coast, which had been overlooked, now grew to such importance as to demand attention. Hereward, "England's darling," as he was called by his admiring countrymen, was lord of Brunn or Bourn, in Lincolnshire, and one of the most resolute chiefs the Normans ever had to encounter. Having expelled the foreigners, who had taken possession of his patrimony, he assisted his neighbours in doing the like, and then established a fortified camp in the Isle of Ely, where he raised the banner of independence, and bade defiance to the Conqueror. His power or influence soon extended along the eastern sea-line, over the fen country of Lincolnshire, Huntingdon, and Cambridge; and English refugees of all classes—thanes dispossessed of their lands, bishops deprived of their mitres, abbots driven from their monasteries to make room for foreigners—repaired from time to time to his "camp of refuge."

The jealous fears of the king increased the danger they were intended to lessen. Though Edwin and Morcar remained perfectly quiet, and showed every disposition to keep their oaths of allegiance, he dreaded them, on account of their great popularity with their countrymen, and he finally resolved to seize their persons. The two earls received timely notice of this intention, and secreted themselves. When he thought the vigilance of the Normans was lulled, Edwin endeavoured to escape to the Scottish border; but he was betrayed by three of his attendants, and fell on the road, gallantly fighting against his Norman pursuers, who cut off his head, and sent it as an acceptable present to the Conqueror.[1] Morcar effected his escape to the morasses of Cambridgeshire, and joined Hereward, whose camp was further crowded about this time by many of the English chiefs of the north, who had been driven homeless into Scotland. Among the ecclesiastics who took this course was Egeliom, the Bishop of Durham. Even Stigand, the primate of all England, but now degraded by king and pope, and replaced by Lanfranc, an Italian, is mentioned among the refugees of Ely.

William at length moved with a formidable army. The difficulties of this war on the eastern coast were different from but not inferior to what the Normans had encountered in the west and the north. There were no mountains and defiles, but the country was in good part a swamp, on which no cavalry could tread; it was cut in all directions by rivers, and streams, and broad meres; and the few roads that led through this dangerous labyrinth were little known to the foreigners. The country, too, where the banner of independence floated was a sort of holy land to the English; the abbeys of Ely, Peterborough, Thorney, and Croyland, the most ancient, the most revered of their establishments, stood within it; and the monks, however professionally timid or peaceful, were disposed to resistance—for they well knew that the coming of the Normans would be the signal for driving them from their monasteries.

During two or three years the Conquest was checked in this direction. The Normans, surprised among the bogs and the tall rushes that covered

[1 "Edwin's career was not a brilliant one," says Ramsay,[i] "but in face of the obloquy that has been heaped upon him, if the judgment of a man's own time is worth anything, we must recognise that the last earl of Mercia had inherited good and lovable qualities that endeared him to English, French, and Norman alike." William's reception of the gift of Edwin's head has been differently related by different historians. He affected to shed tears, we are told. At any rate he seems to have shown no pleasure at the deed, and refused to reward the murderers. He is even said to have expressed his displeasure by banishing the perpetrators.]

[1071 A.D.]

them, suffered many severe losses. The sagacious eye of William at last saw that the proper way of proceeding would be by a blockade that should prevent provisions and succour from reaching the Isle of Ely. He accordingly stationed all the ships he could collect in the Wash, with orders to watch every inlet from the sea to the fens; and he so stationed his army as to block up every road that led into the fens by land. When he resumed more active operations, he undertook a work of great note and difficulty. In order to approach the fortified camp in the midst of marshes, and an expanse of water in some places shallow, in others deep, he began to build a wooden causeway, two miles long, with bridges over the beds of the rivers. Hereward frequently interrupted these operations, and in a manner so murderous, sudden, and mysterious, that the affrighted workmen and soldiers became firmly convinced that he was leagued with the devil, and aided by some necromancer. William, who had brought over with him from Normandy a conjurer and soothsayer as an essential part of his army of invasion, was readily induced to employ a sorceress on the side of the Normans, in order to neutralise or defeat the spells of the English. This sorceress was placed, with much ceremony, on the top of a wooden tower at the head of the works; but Hereward, watching his opportunity, set fire to the dry reeds and rushes; the flames were rapidly spread by the wind, and tower and sorceress, workmen and soldiers, were consumed.

When the Isle of Ely had been blockaded three months, provisions became scarce there. Those whose profession and vowed duties included frequent fasting, were the first to become impatient under privation. The monks of Ely sent to the enemy's camp, offering to show a safe passage across the fens, if the king would only promise to leave them in undisturbed possession of their houses and lands. The king agreed to the condition, and two of his barons pledged their faith for the execution of the treaty. Under proper guides the Normans then found their way into the Isle of Ely, and took possession of the strong monastery which formed part of Hereward's line of defence. They killed one thousand Englishmen, that either occupied an advanced position, or had made a sortie; and then, closing round the "camp of refuge," they finally obliged the rest to lay down their arms. Some of these brave men were liberated on paying heavy fines or ransoms; some were put to death; some deprived of their sight; some maimed and rendered unfit for war, by having a right hand or a foot cut off; some were condemned to perpetual imprisonment.

Hereward, the soul of the confederacy, would not submit; but, making an effort which appeared desperate to all, he rushed from the beleaguered camp, and escaped by throwing himself into the marshes, where the Normans would not venture to follow him. Passing from fen to fen, he gained the low, swampy lands in Lincolnshire, near his own estate, where he was joined by some friends, and renewed a partisan or guerilla warfare, which lasted four or five years, and cost the Normans many lives, but which could not, under existing circumstances, produce any great political result. At last, seeing the hopelessness of the struggle, he listened to terms from William, who was anxious to pacify an enemy his armies could never reach, and who probably admired, as a soldier, his wonderful courage and address. Hereward made his peace, took the oath of allegiance, and was permitted by the Conqueror to preserve and enjoy the estates of his ancestors. The exploits of the last hero of Anglo-Saxon independence formed a favourite theme of tradition and poetry; and long after his death the inhabitants of the Isle of Ely showed with pride the ruins of a wooden tower, which they called the castle of Hereward.

THE CONSOLIDATION OF NORMAN POWER

After the destruction of the camp of refuge in Ely, the Norman forces, naval as well as military, proceeded to the north, to disperse some bands which had again raised the standard of independence, and invoked the presence of Eadgar Ætheling, who was enjoying the tranquillity and obscurity for which he was fitted in Scotland. After some bloody skirmishes, the confederates were driven beyond the Tweed; and then William crossed that river, to seize the English emigrants and punish Malcolm Canmore. A Scottish army, which had been so anxiously expected by the English insurgents at York two years before, when its weight in the scale might have proved fatal to the Normans, had tardily marched, at a moment when the Northumbrians and people of Yorkshire were almost exterminated, and when it could do little more than excite the few remaining inhabitants to a hopeless rising, and burn the houses of such as refused to join in it. The want of provisions in a land

NORMAN KEEP, PEVENSEY

laid waste soon made the Scots recross the Border. To avenge this mere predatory inroad, however, William now advanced from the Tweed to the Firth of Forth, as if he intended to subdue the whole of the "land of the mountain and flood," taking with him the entire mass of his splendid cavalry, and nearly every Norman foot-soldier he could prudently detach from garrison duty in England. The emigrants escaped his pursuit, nor would Malcolm deliver them up; but, intimidated by the advance of an army infinitely more numerous and better armed than his own, the Scottish king, says the *Saxon Chronicle*,† "came and agreed with King William, and delivered hostages, and was his man; and the king went home with all his force."

The Normans had now been seven years in the land, engaged in almost constant hostilities; and at length England, with the exception of Wales, might fairly be said to be conquered. In most abridgments and epitomes of history, the events we have related, in not unnecessary detail, are so faintly indicated, and huddled together in so narrow a space, as to leave an impression that the resistance of our ancestors after the battle of Hastings was trifling and brief—that the sanguinary drama of the Conquest was almost wholly included in one act. Nothing can be more incorrect than this impression, or more unfair to that hardy race of men, who were the fountain-source of at least nine-tenths of the blood that flows in the large and generous veins of the English nation.

[1073 A.D.]

Not long after his return from Scotland circumstances imperatively called for the presence of William in his continental dominions. His talents as a statesman and warrior are indisputable, yet few men have owed more to good fortune. Their wrongs and provocations were the same then as now, and policy would have suggested to the people of Maine to exert themselves a year or two before, when William, engaged in difficult wars in England, would have been embarrassed by their insurrection on the Continent. But they made their great effort just as England was reduced to the quietude of despair, and when William could proceed against them unencumbered by any other war. Héribert, the last count or national chief, bequeathed the county of Maine, bordering on Normandy, to Duke William, who, to the displeasure of the people, but without any important opposition, had taken possession of it several years before he invaded England. Instigated by Fulk, count of Anjou, and vexed by a tyrannical administration, the people of Maine now rose against William, expelled the magistrates he had placed over them, and drove out from their towns the officers and garrisons of the Norman race. Deeming it imprudent to remove his Norman forces from this island, he collected a considerable army among the English population, and carrying them over to Normandy he joined them to some troops levied there, and putting himself at their head, marched into the unfortunate province of Maine. The national valour, which so often opposed him, was now exerted, with a blind fury, in his favour. The English beat the men of Maine, burned their towns and villages, and did as much mischief as the Normans (among whom was a strong contingent from Maine) had perpetrated in England.

While these things were passing on the Continent, Eadgar Ætheling received an advantageous offer of services and co-operation from Philip, king of France, who at last, and too late, roused himself from the strange sloth and indifference with which he had seen the progress made by his overgrown vassal, the duke of Normandy. The events in Maine, the dread inspired in all the neighbouring country, even to the walls of Paris, and William's exhibition of force, were probably the immediate causes that dispelled Philip's long sleep. He invited Eadgar to come to France and be present at his council, promising him a strong fortress, situated on the Channel, at a point equally convenient for making descents upon England or incursions or forays into Normandy. Closing with the proposals, Eadgar got ready a few ships and a small band of soldiers—being aided therein by his sister, the queen of Scotland, and some of the Scottish nobility—and made sail for France.

His usual bad luck attended him; he had scarcely gained the open sea when a storm arose and drove his ships ashore on the coast of Northumberland, where some of his followers were drowned, and others taken prisoners by the Normans. He and a few of his friends of superior rank escaped and got into Scotland, where they arrived in miserable plight, with nothing but the clothes on their backs, some walking on foot, some mounted on sorry beasts. After this misfortune, his brother-in-law, King Malcolm, advised him to seek a reconciliation with William, and Eadgar accordingly sent a messenger to the Conqueror, who at once invited him to Normandy, where he promised proper and honourable treatment. Instead of sailing direct from Scotland, the Ætheling, whose feelings were as obtuse as his intellect, took his way through England, feasting at the castles of the Norman invaders as he went along. William received him with a show of kindness, and allotted him an apartment in the palace of Rouen, with a pound of silver a day for his maintenance; and there the descendant of the great Alfred passed eleven years of his life, occupying himself with dogs and horses.

THE BARONS' REVOLT (1075 A. D.)

The king, who had gone to the Continent to quell one insurrection, was recalled to England by another of a much more threatening nature; planned, not by the English, but by the Norman barons, their conquerors and despoilers. William Fitzosbern, the prime favourite and counsellor of the Conqueror, had died a violent death in Flanders, and had been succeeded in his English domains, and the earldom of Hereford, by his son, Roger Fitzosbern. This young nobleman negotiated a marriage between his sister Emma and Ralph or Raoul de Gaël, a Breton by birth, and earl of Norfolk in England by the right of the sword. For some reason not explained, this alliance was displeasing to the king, who sent from Normandy to prohibit it. The parties were enraged by this prohibition, which they also determined not to obey; and on the day which had been previously fixed for the ceremony, Emma, the affianced, was conducted to Norwich, where a wedding-feast was celebrated, that was fatal to all that were present at it. Among the guests who had been invited, rather for the after-act than to do honour to the bride and bridegroom, was Waltheof, the husband of Judith [whom William had recently created earl of Northumbria]. A sumptuous feast was followed by copious libations; and when the heads of the guests were heated by wine, the earls of Hereford and Norfolk, who were already committed by carrying the forbidden marriage into effect, and who knew the implacable temper of William, opened their plans with a wild and energetic eloquence.

The great object of the Norman conspirators was to gain over Earl Waltheof, whose warlike qualities and great popularity with the English were well known to them, and when they proceeded to divulge the particulars of their plan, the earls of Hereford and Norfolk allured him with the promise of a third of England, which was to be partitioned into the old Saxon kingdoms of Wessex, Mercia, and Northumberland. With the fumes of wine in his head, and a general ardour and enthusiasm around him, Waltheof, it is said, gave his approval to the conspiracy; but, according to one version of the story, the next morning, "when he had consulted with his pillow, and awaked his wits to perceive the danger whereunto he was drawn, he determined not to move in it," and took measures to prevent its breaking out. A more generally received account, however, is, that Waltheof, seeing from the first the madness of the scheme, and the little probability it offered of benefiting the English people, refused to engage in it, and only took an oath of secrecy. The whole project, indeed, was insane; the discontented barons had scarcely a chance of succeeding against the established authority and the genius of William; and their success, had it been possible, would have proved a curse to the country; a step fatally retrograde; a going back towards the time of the Saxon Heptarchy, when England was fractured into a number of petty hostile states. It is quite certain that Waltheof never took up arms, nor did any overt act of treason, but in his uneasiness of mind, and his confidence in so dear a connection, he disclosed to his wife Judith all that had been done in Norwich Castle; and this confidence is generally believed to have been the main cause of his ruin.

Roger Fitzosbern and Ralph de Gaël, the real heads of the confederacy, were hurried into action before their scheme was ripe, for their secret was betrayed by some one. The first of these earls, who had collected his followers and a considerable number of Welsh, was checked in his attempt to cross the Severn at Worcester, nor could he find a passage at any other point. Walter

[1075 A.D.]

de Lacy, a great baron in those parts, soon brought up a mixed host of English and Normans, that rendered the earl of Hereford's project of crossing the Severn, to co-operate with his brother-in-law in the heart of England, altogether hopeless. Lanfranc, the Italian archbishop of Canterbury, who acted as viceroy during William's absence, proceeding with the greatest decision, also sent troops from London and Winchester to oppose Fitzosbern, at whose head he hurled, at the same time, the terrible sentence of excommunication. In writing to the king in Normandy, the primate said: "It would be with pleasure, and as envoy of God, that we could welcome you among us; but," added the energetic old priest, "do not hurry yourself to cross the sea, for it would be putting us to shame to come and aid us in destroying such traitors and thieves." The earl of Hereford fell back from the Severn, and his brother-in-law, the earl of Norfolk, left to himself, and unable to procure in time assistance, for which he had applied to the Danes, was suddenly attacked by a royal army of very superior force, led by Odo, the bishop of Bayeux, who obtained a complete victory, and cut off the right foot of every prisoner he made. The earl retreated to Norwich, garrisoned his castle with the most trusty of his followers, and, leaving his bride to defend it, passed over to Brittany, in hopes of obtaining succour from his countrymen. The daughter of William Fitzosbern defended Norwich Castle with great bravery; and when, at the end of three months, she capitulated, she obtained mild terms for her garrison, which was almost entirely composed of Bretons. They did not suffer in life or limb, but were shipped off to the Continent within forty days.

ANGLO-NORMAN COSTUME
(Before 1200 A. D.)

The Bretons generally had rendered themselves unpopular at William's court. With the true character of their race, they were irascible, turbulent, factious, and much more devoted to the head of their clan than to the king. When they were embarked, Lanfranc wrote to his master, "Glory be to God, your kingdom is at last purged of the filth of these Bretons." The king invaded Brittany, in the hope of exterminating the fugitive earl of Norfolk in his native castle, and reducing that province to entire subjection; but, after laying an unsuccessful siege to the town of Dol, he was obliged to retire before an army of Bretons, who were supported by the French king. William then crossed the Channel to suppress the insurrection in England; but by the time he arrived there was little left for him to do except to punish the principal offenders. The earl of Hereford had been followed, defeated, and taken prisoner, and many of his adherents, Welsh, English, and Normans, hanged on high gibbets, or blinded, or mutilated. At a royal court De Gaël was outlawed, and his brother-in-law, Fitzosbern, condemned to perpetual imprisonment and the forfeiture of his property. Scarcely one of the guests at the ill-augured marriage of Emma escaped with life, and even the inhabitants

of the town of Norwich felt the weight of royal vengeance. The last and most conspicuous victim was Waltheof, who had been guilty, at most, of a misprision of treason. His secret had been betrayed by his wife Judith, who is said, moreover, to have accused him of inviting over the Danish fleet, which now made its appearance on the coast of Norfolk. The motive that made this heartless woman seek the death of her brave and generous husband, was a passion she had conceived for a Norman nobleman, whom she hoped to marry if she could but be made a widow. Others, however, although acting under different impulses, were quite as urgent as the Conqueror's niece for the execution of the English earl. These were Norman barons, who had cast the eyes of affection on his honours and estates—"his great possessions being his greatest enemies."

The judges were divided in opinion as to the proper sentence, some of them maintaining that, as a revolted English subject, Waltheof ought to die; others, that as an officer of the king, and according to Norman law, he ought only to suffer the minor punishment of perpetual imprisonment. These differences of opinion lasted nearly a whole year, during which the earl was confined in the royal citadel of Winchester. At length his wife and other enemies prevailed, the sentence of death was pronounced, and confirmed by the king, who is said to have long wished for the opportunity of putting him out of his way. The unfortunate son of that great and good Earl Siward, whom Shakespeare has immortalised, was executed on a hill, a short distance from the town of Winchester, at a very early hour in the morning, and in great haste, lest the citizens should become aware of his fate and attempt a rescue. His body was thrown into a hole dug at a cross-road, and covered with earth in a hurry; but the king was induced to permit its removal thence, and the English monks of Croyland, to whom the deceased earl had been a benefactor, took it up and carried it to their abbey, where they gave it a more honourable sepulture. The patriotic superstition of the nation soon converted the dead warrior into a saint, and the universal grief of the English people found some consolation in giving a ready credence to the miracles said to be performed at his tomb. The Anglo-Saxon hagiology seems to have abounded, beyond that of most other nations, in unfortunate patriots and heroes who had fallen in battle against the invaders of the country.

And what became of the widow of the brave son of Siward—of the "infamous Judith," as she is called by nearly all the chroniclers? So far from permitting her to marry the man of whom she was enamoured, her uncle William, who was most despotic in these matters, and claimed as part of his prerogative the right of disposing of female wards, insisted on her giving her hand to one Simon, a Frenchman of Senlis, a very brave soldier, but lame and deformed; and when the perverse widow rejected the match with insulting language, he drove her from his presence, deprived her of all Waltheof's estates, and gave them to Simon, without the incumbrance of such a wife. Cast from the king's favour, and reduced to poverty, she became almost as unpopular with the Normans as she was with the English; and the wretched woman, hated by all, or justly contemned, passed the rest of her life in wandering in different corners of England, seeking to hide her shame in remote and secluded places.

The Normans had been gradually encroaching on the Welsh territory, both on the side of the Dee and on the side of the Severn, and now William in person led a formidable army into Wales, where he is said to have struck such terror, that the native princes performed feudal homage to him at St. David's, and delivered many hostages and Norman and English prisoners,

with which he returned as a "victorious conqueror." In the north of England he made no further progress, and had considerable difficulty in retaining the land he had occupied. The Scots again crossed the Tweed and the Tyne, and much harassed the Norman barons. At the approach of a superior army they retired; but William's officers did not follow them, and the only result of the expedition, on the king's side, was the founding of the city of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The impression made upon Scotland by the Conqueror when he had marched in person must have been of the slightest kind, and his circumstances never permitted him to return.

THE REVOLT OF ROBERT (1077–1079 A.D.)

He was now wounded by the sharp tooth of filial disobedience, and obliged to be frequently, and for long intervals, on the Continent, where a fierce and unnatural war was waged between father and son. When William first received the submission of the province of Maine, he had promised the inhabitants to make his eldest son, Robert, their prince; and before departing for the conquest of England he stipulated that, in case of succeeding in his enterprise, he would resign the duchy of Normandy to the same son. So confident was he of success, that he permitted the Norman chiefs, who consented to and legalised the appointment, to swear fealty and render homage to young Robert as their future sovereign. But all this was done to allay the jealousy of the king of France, and his other neighbours, uneasy at the prospect of his vastly extending power; and when he was firmly seated in his conquest, and had strengthened his hands, William openly showed his determination of keeping and ruling both his insular kingdom and his continental duchy. Grown up to man's estate, Robert claimed what he considered his right. "My son, I wot not to throw off my clothes till I go to bed," was the homely but decisive answer of his father.

Robert was brave to rashness, ambitious, impatient of command; and a young prince in his circumstances was never yet without adherents and counsellors, to urge him to those extreme measures on which they found their own hopes of fortune and advancement. He was suspected of fanning the flames of discontent in Brittany as well as in Maine, and to have had an understanding with the king of France, when that monarch frustrated William's attempt to seize the fugitive Breton, Ralph de Gaël, and forced the king of England to raise the siege of Dol. Some circumstances, which added to the number of the unnatural elements already engaged, made Robert declare himself more openly. In person he was less favoured by nature than his two younger brothers, William and Henry, who seemed to engross all their father's favour, and who probably made an improper use of the nickname of *Courte-heuse*,[1] which was given to Robert on account of the shortness of his legs. By the mediation of his mother, who seems to have been fondly attached to him, Robert was reconciled to his father; but the reconciliation did not last long, for the prince was as impatient for authority as ever. At length Robert went to his father and again demanded possession of Normandy; but the king again refused him, exhorting him, at the same time, to change his associates for serious old men, like the royal counsellor and prime minister, Archbishop Lanfranc. "Sire," said Robert bluntly, "I came here to claim my right, and not to listen to sermons; I heard plenty of them, and tedious

[1] Literally "short-hose," or "short-boot"—*Brevis Ocrea.—Orderic. Vital.*

ones, too, when I was learning my grammar." The king wrathfully replied that he would never give up Normandy, his native land, nor share with another any part of England which he had won with his own toil and peril.

"Well, then," said Robert, "I will go and bear arms among strangers, and perhaps I shall obtain from them what is refused to me by my father." He set out accordingly, and wandered through Flanders, Lorraine, Gascony, and other lands, visiting dukes, counts, and rich burgesses, relating his grievances and asking assistance; but all the money he got on these eleemosynary circuits he dissipated among minstrels and jugglers, parasites and prostitutes, and was thus obliged to go again a-begging, or borrow money at an enormous interest. Queen Matilda, whose maternal tenderness was not estranged by the follies and vices of her son, contrived to remit him several sums when he was in great distress. William discovered this, and sternly forbade it for the future. But her heart still yearning for the prodigal the queen made further remittances, and her secret was again betrayed. The king then reproached her, in bitter terms, for distributing among his enemies the treasures he gave her to guard for himself, and ordered the arrest of Samson, her messenger who had carried the money.

After leading a vagabond life for some time, Robert repaired to the French court, and King Philip, still finding in him the instrument he wanted, openly espoused his cause, and established him in the castle of Gerberoy, on the very confines of Normandy, where he supported himself by plundering the neighbouring country, and whence he corresponded with the disaffected in the duchy. Burning with rage, the king crossed the Channel with a formidable English army, and came in person to direct the siege of the strong castle of Gerberoy. With all his faults, Robert had many good and generous qualities, which singularly endeared him to his friends when living, and which, along with his cruel misfortunes, caused him to be mourned when dead. Ambition, passion, and evil counsel had lulled and stupefied, but had not extirpated his natural feelings. One day, in a sally from his castle, he chanced to engage in single combat with a stalwart warrior clad in mail, and concealed, like himself, with the visor of his helm. Both were valiant and well skilled in the use of their weapons; but, after a fierce combat, Robert wounded and unhorsed his antagonist. In the voice of the fallen warrior, who shouted for assistance, the prince, who was about to follow up his advantage with a death-stroke, recognised his father, and, instantly dismounting, fell on his knees, craved forgiveness with tears, and helping him to his saddle, saw him safely out of the *mêlée*. William rode away to his camp on Robert's horse, smarting with his wound, and still cursing his son, who had so seasonably mounted him. He relinquished the siege of Gerberoy in despair, and went to Rouen, where, as soon as his temper permitted, his wife and bishops, with many of the Norman nobles, laboured to reconcile him again to Robert.

For a long time the iron-hearted king was deaf to their entreaties, or only irritated by them. "Why," cried he, "do you solicit me in favour of a traitor who has seduced my men—my very pupils in war, whom I fed with my own bread, and invested with the knightly arms they wear?" At last he yielded, and Robert, having again knelt and wept before him, received his father's pardon, and accompanied him to England. But even now the reconciliation on the part of the unforgiving king was a mere matter of policy, and Robert, finding no symptoms of returning affection, and fearing for his life or liberty, soon fled for the third time, and never saw his father's face again. His departure was followed by another paternal malediction, which was never revoked.

THE UPRISING AT DURHAM

Walcher of Lorraine, installed in the bishopric of Durham and his strong castle "on the highest hill," united to his episcopal functions the political and military government of Northumberland. The earl-bishop boasted that he was equally skilful in repressing rebellion with the edge of the sword, and reforming the morals of the English by eloquent discourse. But the Lorrainer was a harsh taskmaster to the English, laying heavy labours and taxes upon them, and permitting the officers under him and his men-at-arms to plunder, insult, and kill them with impunity. Ligulf, an Englishman of noble birth, and endeared to the whole province, ventured, on being robbed by some of Walcher's satellites, to lay his complaint before the bishop. Shortly after making this accusation, Ligulf was murdered by night in his manor-house, near the city of Durham, and it was well proved that one Gilbert, and others in the bishop's service, were the perpetrators of the foul deed.

"Hereupon," says an old writer, "the malice of the people was kindled against him, and when it was known that he had received the murderers into his house, and favoured them as before, they stomached the matter highly." Secret meetings were held at the dead of night, and the Northumbrians, who had lost none of their old spirit, and were absolutely driven to madness, because, among other causes of endearment, Ligulf had married the widow of Earl Siward, the mother of the unfortunate Earl Waltheof, resolved to take a sanguinary vengeance. Both parties met by agreement at Gateshead; the bishop, who protested his innocence of the homicide, in the pomp of power, surrounded by his retainers; the Northumbrians in humble guise, as if to petition their lord for justice, though every man among them carried a sharp weapon hid under his garment. The bishop, alarmed at the number of English that continued to flock to the place of rendezvous, retired with all his retinue into the church. The people then signified in plain terms that, unless he came forth and showed himself, they would fire the place where he stood. As he did not move, the threat was executed. Then, seeing the smoke and flames arising, he caused Gilbert and his accomplices to be thrust out of the church. The people fell with savage joy on the murderers of Ligulf, and cut them to pieces. Half-suffocated by the heat and smoke, the bishop himself wrapped the skirts of his gown over his face, and came to the threshold of the door. There seems to have been a moment of hesitation; but a voice was heard among the crowd, saying, "Good rede, short rede! slay ye the bishop!" and the bishop was slain accordingly.

The foreigners had nothing left but the alternative of being burned alive or perishing by the sword. The bishop's chaplain [Leofwine] seemed to give a preference to the former death, for he lingered long in the burning church; but in the end he was compelled, by the raging fire, to come out, and was also slain and hacked to pieces—"as he had well deserved," adds an old historian, "being the main promoter of all the mischief that had been done in the country." Of all who had accompanied the bishop to the tragical meeting at Gateshead, only two were left alive, and these were menials of English birth. Above one hundred men, Normans and Flemings, perished with Walcher.

William intrusted to one bishop the office of avenging another. His half-brother, Odo, the fierce bishop of Bayeux, marched to Durham with a numerous army. He found no force on foot to resist him, but he treated the whole country as an insurgent province, and making no distinction of persons,

and employing no judicial forms, he beheaded or mutilated all the men he could find in their houses. Some persons of property bought their lives by surrendering everything they possessed. By this exterminating expedition Odo obtained the reputation of being one of the greatest "dominators of the English"; but it seems to have been the last he commanded, and disgraced with cruelty, during the reign of William.

THE ARREST OF ODO (1082 A.D.)

This churchman, besides being bishop of Bayeux in Normandy, was earl of Kent in England, and held many high offices in this island, where he had accumulated enormous wealth, chiefly by extortion, or a base selling of justice. For some years a splendid dream of ambition, which he thought he could realise by means of money, increased his rapacity. There were many instances in those ages of kings becoming monks, but not one of a priest becoming a king. Profane crowns being out of his reach, Odo aspired to a sacred one—that triple crown of Rome, which gradually obtained, in another shape, a homage more widely extended than that paid to the Cæsars. His dream was cherished by the predictions of some Italian astrologers, who, living in his service, and being well paid, assured him that he would be the successor of Gregory VII, the reigning pope. Odo opened a correspondence with the Eternal City by means of English and Norman pilgrims who were constantly flocking thither, bought a palace at Rome, and sent rich presents to the senators. His project was not altogether so visionary as it has been considered by most writers, and we can hardly understand why his half-brother, William, should have checked it, unless indeed his interference proceeded from his desire of getting possession of the bishop's wealth. The influence of gold had been felt before now in the college of cardinals and the elections of popes. It is quite certain that a considerable number of the Norman chiefs entered into Odo's views; and when he made up his mind to set out for Italy in person, a brilliant escort was formed for him.

The king was in Normandy when he heard of this expedition, and being resolute in his determination of stopping it, he instantly set sail for England. He surprised the aspirant to the popedom at the Isle of Wight, seized his treasures, and summoned him before a council of Norman barons hastily assembled at that island. Here the king accused his half-brother of "untruth and sinister dealings"—of having abused his power, both as viceroy and judge, and as an earl of the realm—of having maltreated the English beyond measure, to the great danger of the common cause—of having robbed the churches of the land—and finally, of having seduced and attempted to carry out of England, and beyond the Alps, the warriors of the king, who needed their services for the safe keeping of the kingdom. Having exposed his grievances, William asked the council what such a brother deserved at his hands. No one durst answer. "Arrest him, then!" cried the king, "and see that he be well looked to!" If they had been backward in pronouncing an opinion, they were still more averse to lay hands on a bishop; not one of the council moved, though it was the king that ordered them. William then advanced himself, and seized the prelate by his robe. "I am a clerk—a priest," cried Odo; "I am a minister of the Lord: the pope alone has the right of judging me!" But his brother, without loosing his hold, replied, "I do not arrest you as bishop of Bayeux, but as earl of Kent." Odo was carried forthwith to Normandy, and, instead of crossing the Alps and the Apennines, was shut up in a castle.

WILLIAM'S LAST YEARS

Soon after imprisoning his brother, William lost his wife, Matilda, whom he tenderly loved; and after her death it was observed or fancied he became more suspicious, more jealous of the authority of his old companions-in-arms, and more avaricious than ever. The coming on of old age is, however, enough in itself to account for such a change in such a man. After a lapse of ten years the Danes were again heard of, and their threats of invading England kept William in a state of anxiety for nearly two whole years, and were the cause of his laying fresh burdens upon his English subjects. He revived the odious Danegeld; and because many lands and manors, which had been charged with it in the time of the Anglo-Saxon kings, had been specially exempted from this tax when he granted them in fief to his nobles, he made up the deficiency by raising it upon the other lands, to the rate of six shillings a hide.

The money he thus obtained, with part of the treasures he had amassed, was employed in hiring and bringing over foreign auxiliaries; for though he could rely on an English army when fighting against Frenchmen, or the people of Normandy, Maine, and Brittany, he could not trust them at home; and he well knew that many of them on the eastern and northeastern shores would join the Danish invaders heart and hand, instead of opposing them. These hordes of foreigners sorely oppressed the natives, for William quartered them throughout the country, to be paid as well as supported. To complete the miseries inflicted upon England at this time, William ordered all the land lying near the sea-coast to be laid waste, so that if the Danes should land they would find no ready supply of food or forage.

Another domestic calamity afflicted the later years of the Conqueror—for he saw a violent jealousy growing up between his favourite sons, William and Henry. Robert, his eldest son, continued an exile or fugitive; and Richard, his second son in order of birth (but whom some make illegitimate), had been gored to death by a stag, some years before, as he was hunting in the New Forest; and he was noted by the old English annalists as being the first of several of the Conqueror's progeny that perished in that place—"the justice of God punishing in him his father's dispeopling of that country."

Perhaps no single act of the Conqueror inflicted more misery within the limits of its operation, and certainly none has been more bitterly stigmatised, than his seizure and wasting of the lands in Hampshire, to make himself a hunting-ground. Like most of the great men of the time, who had few other amusements, William was passionately fond of the chase. The Anglo-Saxon kings had the same taste, and left many royal parks and forests in all parts of England, wherein he might have gratified a reasonable passion; but he was not satisfied with the possession of these, and resolved to have a vast hunting-ground "for his insatiate and superfluous pleasure," in the close neighbourhood of the royal city, Winchester, his favourite place of residence. In an early part of his reign he therefore seized all the southwestern part of Hampshire, measuring thirty miles from Salisbury to the sea, and in circumference not much less than ninety miles. It included many fertile and cultivated manors, which he caused to be totally absorbed in the surrounding wilderness, and many towns or villages, with no fewer than thirty-six mother or parish churches, all which he demolished, and drove away the people, making them no compensation. According to the indisputable authority of Domesday Book, in which we have an account of the state of this territory both before and after its "afforestation," the damage done to private prop-

erty must have been immense. In an extent of nearly ninety miles in circumference, one hundred and eight places, manors, villages, or hamlets suffered in a greater or less degree. The seizure of a waste or wholly uninhabited district would have been nothing extraordinary: it was the sufferings of the people, who were driven from their villages, the wrongs done the clergy, whose churches were destroyed—that made the deep and ineffaceable impression.

At the same time that the Conqueror thus enlarged the field of his own pleasures at the expense of his subjects, he enacted new laws, by which he prohibited hunting in any of his forests, and rendered the penalties more severe than ever had been inflicted for such offences. At this period the killing of a man might be atoned for by payment of a moderate fine or composition; but not so, by the New Forest laws, the slaying of one of the king's beasts of chase. "He ordained," says the *Saxon Chronicle*,[f] "that whosoever should kill a stag or a deer should have his eyes torn out." These forest laws, which were executed with rigour against the English, caused great misery; for many of them depended on the chase as a chief means of subsistence. By including in his royal domain all the great forests of England, and insisting on his right to grant or refuse permission to hunt in them, William gave sore offence to many of his Norman nobles, who were as much addicted to the sport as himself, but who were prohibited from keeping sporting dogs, even on their own estates, unless they subjected the poor animals to a mutilation of the forepaws, that rendered them unfit for hunting.[d]

DOMESDAY BOOK AND THE GEMOT AT SALISBURY (1085–1086 A.D.)

Of William's changes in the possession of landed property, Domesday Book is the great record. This unique and invaluable document was drawn up in pursuance of a decree passed in the Christmas assembly of 1085–1086, and the necessary survey was made in the course of the first seven months of 1086. The immediate object of the survey was a fiscal one, to insure that the tax on the land known as *Danegeld*[1] might be more regularly paid and more fairly assessed. But William further took care to have a complete picture of his kingdom drawn up. We are told in all cases by whom the land was held at the time of the survey, and by whom it had been held in the time of King Edward.

We are told what was the value of the land at those two dates. This is the essence of the inquiry; but we also get a mass of statistics, and a mass of personal and local detail of every kind. As a mere list of landowners under Edward and under William, it enables us to trace the exact degree to which land had passed from Englishmen to Normans. And the incidental notices of tenures, customs, personal anecdotes, the local institutions of districts and towns, are at least as valuable as the essential parts of the survey. With their help we can see England as it was in 1086 more clearly than we can see it at any earlier time, more clearly than we can see it at any later time for a long while after. And not the least instructive thing about the survey is the light which it throws on the general character of William's government, the system of legal fictions, the strict regard to a formal justice. William is assumed throughout as the lawful and immediate successor of

[1] The more correct name is *Heregeld*, that is, a tax for the support of a paid military force. *Danegeld* is, in strictness, money paid to the Danes as blackmail by Æthelred and others. But, as both payments were unpopular, the two names got confounded, and *Danegeld* became the received name of the chief direct tax paid in those times.

[1086 A.D.]

Edward. The reign of Harold is ignored. The grant of William is assumed as the one lawful source of property; but there is throughout a clear desire to do justice according to that doctrine, to secure every man in his right, as William understood right, without any regard to race or rank. Powerful Normans, William's own brothers among them, are entered as withholding lands wrongfully, sometimes from other Normans, sometimes from Englishmen. Domesday, in short, may be set alongside of the English Chronicle as one of the two great and unique sources of English history. They are possessions which have no parallel elsewhere.[c]

When in 1086 work on the Domesday Book was completed, William summoned a great assembly or *gemot* of all the landowners of all England to meet him at Salisbury. William's experience as a continental feudal lord probably determined the taking of such steps as would forever preclude the introduction of the evils of the French system into England. Therefore to

DOVER CASTLE
(Founded by the Romans)

every landholding man in his kingdom, whether as tenant-in-chief he held his grant of the king, or whether as sub-tenant he held of an intermediate lord, a summons was directed. When they were all gathered together, great and small, William made each tenant kneel before him and swear fealty to him, and make oath that he would be "faithful to him against all other men." It was this gemot at Salisbury that marks the difference between the feudalism of England and the feudalism of the Continent. According to the continental system every tenant swore fealty to the lord of whom he held his land. But only such tenants as held directly of the crown swore fealty to the king. The result of this system was that the sub-tenants felt their allegiance to their lord of more weight than their allegiance to the king, and in case the lord rebelled against the king they were bound by their oaths to assist him. In England, from 1086 on, every landowner owed his services first to the king, and by his oath was bound to forsake his immediately superior lord if the latter revolted against the king.

"No one act in English history," says Freeman,[c] "is more important than this. By it William secured his realm against the growth of feudal doctrines and their abuses. It established the principle that, whatever duty a man might owe to an inferior lord, his duty to his sovereign lord, the king, came first. When this rule was once established, the mightiest earl in England could never be to William what William himself was to his own lord, the king of the French. This one act of the wisdom of the Conqueror secured the unity of England forever."[a]

THE DEATH OF THE CONQUEROR (1087 A.D.)

Shortly after receiving these new pledges, William, accompanied by his two sons, passed over to the Continent, followed by the numberless curses of the English people. The enterprise he had on hand was a war with France, for the possession of the city of Mantes, with the territory situated between the Epte and the Oise, which was then called the country of Vexin. William at first entered into negotiations for this territory, which he claimed as his right; but Philip, the French king, after amusing his rival for a while with quibbles and sophisms, marched troops into the country, and secretly authorized some of his barons to make incursions on the frontiers of Normandy.

During the negotiations William fell sick, and kept his bed. As he advanced in years he grew excessively fat; and, spite of his violent exercise, his indulgence in the pleasures of the table had given him considerable rotundity of person. On the score of many grudges, his hatred of the French king was intense; and Philip now drove him to frenzy by saying, as a good joke among his courtiers, that his cousin William was a long while lying-in, but that no doubt there would be a fine churching when he was delivered. On hearing this coarse and insipid jest, the conqueror of England swore by the most terrible of his oaths—by the splendour and birth of Christ—that he would be churched in Notre Dame, the cathedral of Paris, and present so many wax torches that all France should be set in a blaze.

It was not until the end of July (1087) that he was in a state to mount his war-horse, though it is asserted by a contemporary that he was convalescent before then, and expressly waited that season to make his vengeance the more dreadful to the country. The corn was almost ready for the sickle, the grapes hung in rich ripening clusters on the vines, when William marched his cavalry through the corn-fields, and made his soldiery tear up the vines by the roots, and cut down the pleasant trees. His destructive host was soon before Mantes, which either was taken by surprise and treachery, or offered but a feeble resistance. At his orders the troops fired the unfortunate town, sparing neither church nor monastery, but doing their best to reduce the whole to a heap of ashes. As the Conqueror rode up to view the ruin he had made, his horse put his forefeet on some embers or hot cinders, which caused him to swerve or plunge so violently that the heavy rider was thrown on the high pommel of the saddle and grievously bruised.

The king dismounted in great pain, and never more put foot in stirrup. He was carried slowly in a litter to Rouen and again laid in his bed. The bruise had produced a rupture; and being in a bad habit of body, and somewhat advanced in years, it was soon evident to all, and even to himself, that the consequence would be fatal. He had himself carried to the monastery of St. Gervase, outside of the city walls, where he lingered for six weeks, surrounded by doctors, who could do him no good, and by priests and monks, who, at least, did not neglect the opportunity of doing much good for themselves. Becoming sensible of the approach of death, his heart softened for the first time, and he is said to have felt a keen remorse for the crimes and cruelties he had committed. He sent money to Mantes, to rebuild the churches he had burned, and he ordered large sums to be paid to the churches and monasteries in England. At length he consented to the instant release of his state-prisoners, some of whom had pined in dungeons for more than twenty years. Of those that were English among these captives, the most conspicuous were Earl Morcar, Beorn, and Ulnoth or Wulfnoth, the brother

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of Harold; of the Normans, Roger Fitzosbern, formerly earl of Hereford, and Odo, bishop of Bayeux, his own half-brother. The pardon which was wrung from him with most difficulty was that of Odo, whom, at first, he excepted in his act of grace, saying he was a firebrand that would ruin both England and Normandy if set at large.

His two younger sons, William and Henry, were assiduous round the death-bed of the king, waiting impatiently for the declaration of his last will. A day or two before his death, the Conqueror assembled some of his chief prelates and barons in his sick chamber, and declared in their presence that he bequeathed the duchy of Normandy, with Maine and its other dependencies, to his eldest son, Robert, whom, it is alleged, he could not put aside in the order of succession, as the Normans were mindful of the oaths they had taken, with his father's consent, to that unfortunate prince, and were much attached to him. "As to the crown of England," said the dying monarch, "I bequeath it to no one, as I did not receive it, like the duchy of Normandy, in inheritance from my father, but acquired it by conquest and the shedding of blood with mine own good sword. The succession to that kingdom I therefore leave to the decision of God, only desiring most fervently that my son William, who has ever been dutiful to me in all things, may obtain it, and prosper in it."

"And what do you give unto me, O my father?" impatiently cried Prince Henry, who had not been mentioned in this distribution. "Five thousand pounds' weight of silver out of my treasury," was his answer. "But what can I do with five thousand pounds of silver, if I have neither lands nor a home?" "Be patient," replied the king, "and have trust in the Lord; suffer thy elder brothers to precede thee—thy time will come after theirs."[g] Henry went straight, and drew the silver, which he weighed with great care, and then furnished himself with a strong coffer, well protected with locks and iron bindings, to keep his treasure in. William left the king's bedside at the same time, and, without waiting to see the breath out of the old man's body, hastened over to England to look after his crown.

About sunrise on the 9th of September the Conqueror was for a moment roused from a stupor into which he had fallen by the sound of bells; he eagerly inquired what the noise meant, and was answered that they were tolling the hour of prime in the church of St. Mary. He lifted his hands to heaven, and saying, "I recommend my soul to my lady Mary, the holy mother of God," instantly expired.[d]

THE BURIAL OF THE CONQUEROR

The monkish historian, Ordericus Vitalis,[g] who lived during the latter part of William's reign, has left in his *Ecclesiastical History* a startling picture of the events which followed the king's death.[a]

The physicians and others who were present, who had watched the king all night while he slept, his repose neither broken by cries nor groans, seeing him now expire so suddenly and unexpectedly, were much astonished, and became as men who had lost their wits. Notwithstanding, the wealthiest of them mounted their horses and departed in haste to secure their property. But the inferior attendants, observing that their masters had disappeared, laid hands on the arms, the plate, the robes, the linen, and all the royal furniture, and leaving the corpse almost naked on the floor of the house, hastened away. Observe then, I pray you, my readers, how little trust can be

placed in human fidelity. All these servants snatched up what they could of the royal effects, like so many kites, and took to their heels with their booty. Roguery thus came forth from its hiding-place the moment the great justiciary was dead, and first exercised its rapacity round the corpse of him who had so long repressed it.

Intelligence of the king's death was quickly spread, and, far and near, the hearts of those who heard it were filled with joy or grief. Behold this mighty prince, who was lately obsequiously obeyed by more than a hundred thousand men in arms, and at whose nod nations trembled, was now stripped by his own attendants, in a house which was not his own, and left on the bare ground from the hour of primes to that of tierce.

Meanwhile, the citizens of Rouen having heard of the death of their prince, were in the greatest state of alarm; almost all of them lost their reason, as if they had been intoxicated, and were thrown into as much confusion as if the city had been threatened with an assault by a powerful army. Each quitted the place where he received the news, and ran to confer with his wife, or the first friend or acquaintance he met, as to what was to be done. Everyone removed, or prepared to remove, his valuables, concealing them with alarm, lest they should be discovered.

At length the religious, both clergy and monks, recovering their courage and the use of their senses, formed a procession; and, arrayed in their sacred vestments, with crosses and censers, went in due order to St. Gervais, where they commended the spirit of the departed king to God, according to the holy rites of the Christian faith. Then William, the archbishop, ordered the body to be conveyed to Caen, and interred there in the abbey of St. Stephen, the protomartyr, which the king himself had founded. His brother and other relations had already quitted the place, and all his servants had deserted him, as if he had been a barbarian; so that not one of the king's attendants was found to take care of his corpse. However, Herlouin, a country knight, was induced by his natural goodness to undertake the charge of the funeral, for the love of God and the honour of his country. He therefore procured at his own expense persons to embalm and carry the body, and, hiring a hearse, he caused it to be carried by water and land to Caen.

Gilbert, the lord abbot, with the whole convent of monks, met the hearse in solemn procession, accompanied by a sorrowing multitude of clerks and laymen, offering prayers. But at this moment a sudden calamity filled the minds of all with alarm. For a fire broke out in one of the houses, and, shooting up prodigious volumes of flame, spread through a great part of the town of Caen, doing great damage. The crowds, both of clergy and laity, hastened with one accord to extinguish the fire, so that the monks were left alone to finish the service they had begun.

When the mass ended, and the coffin was already lowered into the grave, but the corpse was still on the bier, the great Gilbert, bishop of Évreux, ascended the pulpit, and pronounced a long and eloquent discourse on the distinguished character of the deceased prince. When he had concluded his discourse he addressed himself to the congregation, who were shedding affectionate tears, and added this supplication: "As in this present life no man can live without sin, I beseech you, for the love of Christ, that you earnestly intercede with Almighty God on behalf of our deceased prince, and that you kindly forgive him, if in aught he has offended against you."

Then Ascelin, son of Arthur, came forward from the crowd, and preferred the following complaint with a loud voice, in the hearing of all: "The land," he said, "on which you stand was the yard belonging to my father's house,

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which that man for whom you pray, when he was yet only duke of Normandy, took forcible possession of, and in the teeth of all justice, by an exercise of tyrannical power, here founded this abbey. I therefore lay claim to this land, and openly demand its restitution, and in God's name I forbid the body of the spoiler being covered with earth which is my property, and buried in my inheritance." The bishops and other great men, on hearing this, and finding from inquiries among his neighbours that he spoke the truth, drew the man aside, and, instead of offering him any violence, appeased his resentment with gentle words and came to terms with him. For the small space in which the grave was made, they paid him on the spot sixty shillings, and promised him a proportionable price for the rest of the land which he claimed.

I have thus carefully investigated, and given a true narrative of the various events. In the midst of prosperity adverse circumstances were permitted to arise, that the hearts of men might be impressed with the fearful warnings. A king once potent, and warlike, and the terror of the numberless inhabitants of many provinces, lay naked on the floor, deserted by those who owed him their birth, and those he had fed and enriched. He needed the money of a stranger for the cost of his funeral, and a coffin and bearers were provided at the expense of an ordinary person, for him, who till then had been in the enjoyment of enormous wealth. He was carried to the church, amidst flaming houses, by trembling crowds, and a spot of freehold land was wanting for the grave of one whose princely sway had extended over so many cities, and towns, and villages. Beholding the corruption of that foul corpse, men were taught to strive earnestly, by the rules of a salutary temperance, after better things than the delights of the flesh, which is dust, and must return to dust.[g]

THE CHARACTER OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR

We are fortunately in possession of an estimate of the character of William from the pen of one who knew him in the flesh as he lived, and paused in writing the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*[f] to describe what manner of man he was. Though the great Conqueror is portrayed with the lack of historical perspective inevitable to a contemporary, it yet gives us the measure of the man with a massive sincerity that cannot be surpassed by any flight of the rhetorician.[a]

If any would know what manner of man King William was, the glory he obtained and of how many lands he was lord, then will we describe him as we have known him, we, who have looked upon him, and who once lived in his court. This King William, of whom we are speaking, was a very wise and a great man, and more honoured and more powerful than any of his predecessors. He was mild to those good men who loved God, but severe beyond measure towards those who withstood his will. He founded a noble monastery on the spot where God permitted him to conquer England, and he established monks in it, and he made it very rich. In his days the great monastery at Canterbury was built, and many others also throughout England. King William was also held in much reverence; he wore his crown three times every year when he was in England: at Easter he wore it at Winchester, at Pentecost at Westminster, and at Christmas at Gloucester. And at these times, all the men of England were with him, archbishops, bishops, abbots, and earls, thanes, and knights. So also was he a very stern and a

wrathful man, so that none durst do anything against his will, and he kept in prison those earls who acted against his pleasure. He removed bishops from their sees and abbots from their offices, and he imprisoned thanes, and at length he spared not his own brother Odo.

Amongst other things, the good order that William established is not to be forgotten; it was such that any man, who was himself aught, might travel over the kingdom with a bosom-full of gold unmolested; and no man durst kill another, however great the injury he might have received from him. He reigned over England, and being sharp-sighted to his own interest, he surveyed the kingdom so thoroughly that there was not a single hide of land throughout the whole of which he knew not the possession, and how much it was worth, and this he afterwards entered in his register. The land of the Britons (Wales) was under his sway, and he built castles therein; moreover, he had full dominion over the Isle of Mann (Anglesea): Scotland also was subject to him from his great strength; the land of Normandy was his by inheritance, and he possessed the earldom of Maine; and had he lived two years longer he would have subdued Ireland by his prowess, and that without a battle. Truly there was much trouble in these times, and very great distress; he caused castles to be built, and oppressed the poor. The king was also of great sternness, and he took from his subjects many marks of gold, and many hundred pounds of silver, and this, either with or without right, and with little need. He was given to avarice and greedily loved gain. He made large forests for the deer, and enacted laws therewith, so that whoever killed a hart or a hind should be blinded. As he forbade killing the deer, so also the boars; and he loved the tall stags as if he were their father. He also appointed concerning the hares, that they should go free.

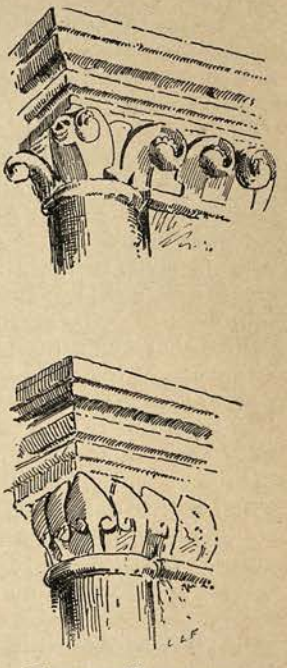
The rich complained and the poor murmured, but he was so sturdy that he recked naught of them; they must will all that the king willed, if they would live; or would keep their lands; or would hold their possessions; or would be maintained in their rights. Alas! that any man should so exalt himself, and carry himself in his pride over all! May Almighty God show mercy to his soul, and grant him the forgiveness of his sins! We have written concerning him these things, both good and bad, that virtuous men might follow after the good and wholly avoid the evil, and might go in the way that leadeth to the kingdom of heaven.*f*

CHARACTER AND RESULTS OF THE NORMAN CONQUEST

Looking at the Norman Conquest simply as an event, it is most important to bear in mind its gradual nature. Nothing can be farther from the truth than the notion that England passed at once into the hands of the Normans after a single battle. Still there is a sense in which it is not untrue to say that England was conquered in a single battle. After the fall of Harold, at all events after the northern earls withdrew their forces from the service of Eadgar, the conquest of England was only a question of time. Just as in the days of Æthelred, there was no acknowledged leader; and throughout that age, under a worthy leader, the English people could do everything; without such an one, they could do nothing. There was no man who could gather the whole force of the nation around him. There was no man who could stand up as William's rival either in military or in political skill.

Hence, after the one great battle, there was no common effort. The west resisted valiantly; the north resisted valiantly; but the resistance of each

was isolated, without any intelligent concert. Help came from Denmark; but it was of no avail when there was no generalship, no common plan, and when the Danish leaders were actually bribed by William. In all these ways the strength of the country was frittered away. After Harold fell in the first battle, there was no real leader left, and the first pitched battle was the last. Next to the fall of Harold and his brothers in the first battle, William's greatest advantage was the submission of London and of the chief men assembled in London. This enabled him to be crowned king at an early stage of the war, when not more than a third of the country was in his actual possession. From that time his government had a show of legality. The resistance of the west and north was, in fact, as truly resistance to an invading enemy as the fight on Senlac itself. But when William was once crowned, when there was no other king in the land, resistance to him took the outward form of rebellion. The gradual nature of the conquest, together with William's position as crowned king at the head of an established government, even enabled him to turn the force of the conquered districts against those which were still unconquered, and to subdue England in some measure by the arms of Englishmen. Thus, within five years from his landing, anything like real resistance had come to an end. William was full king throughout the land.



NORMAN MOULDINGS

We must here, in considering the effects of the Norman Conquest, distinguish between those immediate effects, which are rather the form which the Conquest itself took, and those lasting effects, which the peculiar nature of the Conquest caused it to have upon the whole future history of England. The peculiar nature of William's claim, and the personal character of William himself, had the deepest influence both on the character of the Conquest itself as an event, and on the character of its permanent results.

Influences of Territorial Conquest

The effect of the peculiar position and character of William was that his settlement was in truth a territorial conquest veiled under legal forms. In William's reading of the law, if he was not himself actually king from the moment of Edward's death, yet at least he was the one lawful successor to the kingdom. It was therefore treason to fight against him, or to put any hindrance in the way of his taking possession of the crown. The lands and goods of traitors were confiscated to the crown; therefore the lands and goods of all who had opposed William, living or dead, were confiscated to him. The crown lands—and, in William's reading of the law, the folkland was crown land—of course passed to the new king. The whole folkland, then, together with the lands of all who had fallen on Senlac, including the vast estates of Harold and his brothers, all passed to William, and was at his disposal. But as no Englishmen had supported his claims, as many Englishmen had

opposed him in arms, the whole nation was involved either in actual or in constructive treason.

The whole soil of England, then, except the property of ecclesiastical corporations, was forfeited to the new king. But William was not inclined to press his claims to the uttermost; at his first entry he allowed the mass of the English landowners to redeem the whole or a part of their possessions. Gradually, after each conquest of a district, after each suppression of a revolt, more land came into the king's power. That land was dealt with according to his pleasure. It was restored, wholly or in part, to its former owners; it was granted away, wholly or in part, to new owners, as William thought good in each particular case. But in every case, whether a man kept his own land, or received land which had belonged to some one else, all land was held as a grant from the king. The only proof of lawful ownership was either the king's written grant, or else evidence that the owner had been put in possession by the king's order. Of this process of confiscation and regrant, carried out bit by bit during the whole reign of William, Domesday is the record. We see that, in the course of William's twenty-one years reign, the greater part of the land of England had changed hands. We see further, as we might take for granted in such a case, that by far the greater part of the land which was granted to new owners was granted to William's foreign followers. By the end of William's reign all the greatest estates in England had passed into the hands of Normans and other strangers. But we see, also, that it is an utter mistake to believe that Englishmen were indiscriminately turned out of hearth and home. A few Englishmen who had, in whatever way, won William's special favour, kept great estates. A crowd of Englishmen kept small estates or fragments of great ones. In a vast number of cases the English owner kept his lands as tenant under a Norman grantee. Altogether, the actual occupants of the soil must have been much less disturbed than might have seemed possible in so great a transfer of lands from one set of owners to another.

The special feature of this great transfer of land from men of one nation to men of another is that it was done gradually and under legal form. It was not a mere scramble for what every man could get; nor was it like those cases in the early Teutonic invasions when the lands of the conquered, or a part of them, were systematically divided among the conquering army. Every step in William's great confiscation was done regularly, and according to his notion of law. Every man, Norman or English, held his land only by a grant from King William. No general change was made in the tenure of land. William took lands here, and granted them there, according to the circumstances of each case. Most commonly he took from Englishmen and gave to Normans. But he took from Englishmen and gave to Normans, not by virtue of any legal distinction between Englishmen and Normans, but because it was, as a rule, Englishmen who incurred forfeiture by resisting him, Normans who deserved reward by serving him.

As William dealt with land, so he dealt with offices. The two processes were to some extent the same; for most ecclesiastical and many temporal offices carried with them land, or rights over land. Gradually, and under cover of law, the highest offices in church and state were taken from Englishmen and bestowed on Normans. At the end of William's reign there was no English earl, but one English bishop, and only a few English abbots. But this change was not made all at once. In the appointment of earls William brought in a new policy which reversed that of Canute. The great earldoms were broken up. There were no more earls of the West-Saxons or of the Mercians, and

the earldom of Northumberland now meant only the modern county. Other officers, sheriffs, stallers, and the like, were in the same way gradually changed. But smaller posts largely remained in the hands of Englishmen.

The same system was carried on with ecclesiastical offices also, although in this case a greater degree of caution was needed. The king might by himself, or at all events with the consent of his witan, remove a sheriff, an earl, or any temporal officer: to remove a bishop or abbot needed, in William's view, full ecclesiastical sanction. Throughout William's reign, when a bishop died, a foreign successor was found for him, and those English bishops against whom any canonical charge could be devised were removed without waiting for their death. The same general rule was applied to the abbots, though here the exclusion of Englishmen was not quite so strict. Though the greater number of the newly appointed abbots were strangers, a few Englishmen were appointed to abbeys, even down to the end of William's reign.

Institutional and Legal Innovations

In the constitution of England William made no formal change, and the particular laws of his enacting were few. The direct changes of his reign had some analogy to the direct changes which followed on the introduction of Christianity. No old institutions were abolished; but some new institutions were set up by the side of the old ones. The old national assemblies went on, without any change in the former constitution. The real change in their character was not a formal but a practical one. The assembly, which at the beginning of William's reign was an assembly of Englishmen, with here and there a Norman, had, before the end of his reign, changed into an assembly of Normans, with here and there an Englishman. The assemblies, as before, were in ordinary times mere gatherings of the great men of the realm; but, as before, on special occasions, a vast multitude was brought together.

Of the few actual changes in the law which William made, the most part were mere ordinances enacted to meet the immediate needs of the time. Thus, for instance, in the appeal to the judgment of God, the English ordeal and the Norman wager of battle were alike legalised and regulated. Provisions were made for the safety of William's foreign followers, especially by the singular law of Murder and Englishry, according to which, if an unknown man was found dead, he was held to be a Norman, unless he could be proved to be English. The chief permanent change in our law, which was due to an actual ordinance of William's, was a part of his ecclesiastical reformation, the separation of the temporal and spiritual jurisdictions. Hitherto the bishop and the earl had sat together in the *scirgemót*, and had heard both ecclesiastical and temporal causes. This was now forbidden, and separate ecclesiastical courts began. The strict forest law of William's reign must also have been an innovation; but it does not exist in the shape of a code; we know it only by the complaints of the contemporary chronicles, and by the practice of later times. In all legal matter the ancient assemblies and the ancient forms went on; nor was there any direct change in the language of the law. English remained, as before, an alternative language with Latin.

Lasting Results of the Conquest

But the immediate and formal changes which followed on William's coming were of small account when compared with the indirect, and far more important, changes which came, as it were, of themselves, as the natural

result of his coming. A revolution was gradually wrought in everything that touched the relations of the kingdom within and without. But it was a revolution of a strange kind. It was a revolution which seemed, if not to root up our ancient institutions, at least practically so to transform them that they might be deemed to have in truth passed away. It was a revolution which seemed to have broken down the spirit of Englishmen forever under the yoke of strangers. But what that revolution really did was to call forth the spirit of Englishmen in a stronger and more abiding shape, and to enable us to bring back under new forms the substance of the institutions which seemed for a moment to have passed away. This will be, then, the best place to go through the chief lasting results of the Conquest, and to show how deeply, and in what ways, that event has influenced our institutions and the general course of English history down to our own day.

England linked to the Continent.

First of all, the Norman Conquest altogether changed the European position of England. As soon as England was ruled by a continental prince who kept his dominions on the Continent, Britain ceased to be that separate world which it had hitherto been. And though after events brought us back in no small degree to our older, insular character, yet Britain has never again become so completely another world as it was in the older day. In ecclesiastical matters this took the form of a far closer connection with the see of Rome than had been known before. The insular position of Britain had hitherto made the English church far more independent of the see of Rome than the western churches generally. One great effect of the Conquest was to weaken this insular church more nearly into the same position as the churches of the mainland. In this, as in many other things, the Conquest did but confirm and hasten tendencies which were already at work. The reforms of Dunstan's day marked one step Romewards. Another, we may say, was marked by the pilgrimage of Canute. The reign of Edward (the Confessor), a special devotee of the Roman church, wrought still more strongly in the same direction. But the great step of all was taken by William himself. When he sought for a papal confirmation of his claim to the crown of England, he went very far towards clothing the pope with a power to dispose of that crown. In William's own hands the rights of his crown were safe. When Hildebrand (Gregory VII) himself called on him to do homage for his crown, he refused to do what no king of the English had done before him.

So, while the great struggle of investitures was raging in Germany and Italy, William went on in England and in Normandy investing bishops and abbots with the staff, as the kings and dukes before him had done. Nor did Hildebrand ever blame William for doing what he branded as such deadly sin in his own sovereign, the emperor. Under William the old ecclesiastical supremacy of the crown remained untouched; but it is none the less true that two acts of his had a direct tendency to undermine it. The separation of the ecclesiastical and temporal jurisdictions led the way to those claims on the part of churchmen to be exempted from all temporal jurisdiction which were unheeded in his day, but which became matter of such important controversy under his successors. And, though he himself firmly refused all homage for his crown, yet, when he made the pope a judge between himself and Harold, he led the way for the day when his descendant took his crown back again as a fief of the Roman see.

The Crown and Feudalism

With regard to the effects of the Conquest on English institutions, the Norman king stepped into the position of his English predecessors. As king he claimed their rights, and no more. But the circumstances of the Conquest worked in every way to increase his power, and to provide him with new means of influence and new sources of revenue. The notion that William introduced a "feudal system" into England is a delusion which shows utter ignorance both of the position of William and of the general history of Europe. If by a "feudal system" is meant the state of things in Germany and Gaul, a state of things in which every great vassal became a rival to the king, William took direct care that no such "feudal system" should ever be introduced into his kingdom. But if by a "feudal system" is meant merely the holding of land by military tenure, subject to the burthens of reliefs, wardships, marriage, and the like, though William certainly did not introduce such a "system" ready made, yet the circumstances of his reign did much to promote the growth of that kind of tenure, and of the whole class of ideas connected with it.

THE COMMANDERY, WORCESTER
(Founded by St. Wulfstan, bishop of Worcester, 1085)

Such tendencies were already growing in England, and his coming strengthened them. Under him the doctrine that all land is a grant from the crown became a fact. The doctrine of military tenure began in his reign, and was put into a systematic shape, and carried out to its logical consequences in the reign of his son. The Norman kings ruled in a twofold character: they were all that their English predecessors had been, and something more. The Norman king was the chief of the state; he was also the personal lord of every man in his kingdom. In the one character he could call out the military force of the state; in the other he could call on his tenants for the military service due from their lands. As chief of the state he levied the ancient taxes due to the state; as lord he levied the new-fangled profits which, according to the new-fangled ideas, were due to the lord from his tenants. In short, William brought in that side of feudal doctrine which helped to strengthen the crown, and kept out that side which helped to weaken it. The doctrine that a man was bound to follow his immediate lord had destroyed the royal power in other lands. William, by making himself the immediate lord of all his subjects, turned that doctrine into the strongest support of his crown.

This union of two sources of power in the Norman kings made their rule practically despotic. But their very despotism preserved English freedom. They had no temptation to uproot institutions which they found means to turn into instruments of their power. But there was no sweeping away, no sudden revolution; all was done gradually, and by force of circumstances at particular times. At some points of our history, the freedom of England

seems sometimes to slumber; but it never died. The seeming slumber under Norman despotism led to the awakening of the thirteenth century.

The king was thus in possession of two sources of power, of two sources of revenue. One source came by inheritance from his English predecessors; another came from the circumstances of William's conquest. He was both king and lord of all men within his realm. To the English he was in the first place king; to the Normans he was in the first place lord. Each race had need of him, and the Norman kings knew how to play off each race against the other. In the first days of the Conquest, the king, if he was not the friend of his English subjects, was, at least, not their worst enemy. His power was some protection against local oppressors.

National Assemblies

The greatest effect of the Norman Conquest is really to be looked for, not in any sudden changes, least of all in any great and immediate legislative changes, but in a complete, though gradual, change of the administrative system, and in such changes of the law as followed upon those changes in the administration. And even the administrative changes seldom took the form of the utter abolition of anything old. They, too, rather took the form, sometimes of setting up something new by the side of the old, sometimes only of increasing the importance of one old institution at the expense of another. Thus the national assemblies themselves changed their character, and a variety of institutions were developed out of the national assemblies, by no cause so much as by the growth of the summons. Wherever it becomes usual specially to summon particular members of an assembly, the first step is taken towards the exclusion of all who are not so specially summoned.

In the great assembly at Salisbury, where all the landowners of England became the "men" of the king, we see the first germs of lords and commons. The witan are distinguished from the "land-sitting men." By the witan, so called long after the Conquest, we are doubtless to understand those great men of the realm who were usually summoned to every assembly. The vast multitude who came to do their homage to the king were summoned only for that particular occasion. The personal right of summons is the essence of the peerage. It is the distinctive mark round which all the other honours and privileges of the peer have grown. The earls and the bishops of England, by never losing their right to the personal summons, have kept that right to personal attendance in the national assembly, which was once common to all freemen, but which other freemen have lost. The house of lords represents, by unbroken succession, the witan of the assembly of Salisbury; that is, it represents by unbroken succession the old assemblies of the Teutonic democracy. Never did any institution so utterly change its character. But the change has been the gradual result of circumstances, without any violent break. The "land-sitting men," on the other hand, not summoned personally or regularly, but summoned in a mass when their attendance was specially needed, gradually lost the right of personal attendance, till in the end they gained, instead, the more practical right of appearing by their representatives. Thus grew the commons. The steps by which the national assemblies took their final shape do not begin till a later time. But it is important to notice that the first glimpse of something like lords and commons—a distinction which doubtless already existed in practice, but which is nowhere before put into a formal shape—dates from the last years of the Conqueror.

The practice of summons thus gave birth to our final parliamentary constitution. It gave birth also to a vast number of administrative and judicial institutions, of which we see traces before the Conquest, but which put on their definite shape under the Norman kings. The practice of summons produced the house of lords. It produced also the *curia regis*, the king's court, out of which so many institutions grew. The king's court is properly the national assembly itself; but the name gradually came to be confined to a kind of judicial and administrative committee of the assembly. Even before the Norman Conquest, we get a faint glimpse of a body of the king's immediate counsellors, bearing the name of the *theningmannagemót*. Out of this body, to which was gradually attached the name of *curia regis*, grew, on the one side, the privy council, and out of that the modern cabinet, and on the other side the courts of law.

Along with the practice of summons grew the importance of those who were most specially and habitually summoned, the great officers of the king's court and household. Soon after the Conquest these officers began to rise into an importance which they had never held before. Nothing is so important under the Norman reigns as the exchequer. But the exchequer is simply an old institution with a new name, and the treasurer is simply an old officer with a new name. The king's hoard or treasury must always have had a keeper; but the hoarder, under the Latin name of treasurer, grew into increased importance in times when the main object of government seemed to be to fill the king's hoard. The hoard or treasury got the playful name of exchequer,[1] and it grew into two departments of state, administrative and judicial.

The chancellor again is found by that title under Edward the Confessor, and his office must have existed under some title as early as there was any settled government at all. But it is under the Norman kings that he gradually grew to great importance and dignity, an importance and dignity which have been more lasting in his case than in the case of any other of the great officials of those days. But the greatest dignitary of the Norman reigns, the justiciar, really seems to have been wholly new. The name is first given to the regents who represented William in his absence from England; and the office may well have grown up through the need which was felt for some such representative when the king visited his dominions beyond sea. The modern judicial system of England begins, in something like its present shape, in the reign of Henry II. But its growth is one of the direct results of the Norman Conquest. The older judicial system is essentially local and popular. After the Conquest this system grows, till in the end the local chiefs, the earl and the bishop, are wholly displaced by the king's judges. Thus grew up the lawyers' doctrine that the king is the fountain of justice. But the popular element survived in the various forms of the jury. It is idle to debate about the invention or introduction of trial by jury. The truth is that it never was invented or introduced; that, even more than other institutions, it emphatically grew. Its germ may be seen in all those cases, compurgation or any other, where a matter is decided by the oaths of men taken from the community at large. The Conquest caused a step in advance by the more constant employment of recognitions taken on oath.

In this way justice became more centralised in England than anywhere else. All the weightier causes came to be tried either in the king's own

[1] The older names are *fiscus* and *thesaurus*. *Scaccarium* or exchequer was the established name by the time of Henry II. It comes from the party-coloured cloth with which the table was covered, which suggested the notion of a chess-board.

courts or by judges immediately commissioned by him. The local chiefs gave way to the king's representatives. One local officer indeed grew into increased activity. This was the officer who in each shire had always been specially the king's officer, the shire-reeve or sheriff, who looked after the interests of the king, while the ealdorman or earl represented the separate being of the shire. Under William, earls ceased to be appointed save where they had distinct military duties. Under his successors earldoms gradually sank into merely honorary dignities. But the sheriff was in the Norman reigns the busiest of all officers; for he had to collect and bring in all that was due to the royal exchequer from the endless sources of income by which it was fed.

The Changed Idea of Kingship

The main political result of the Norman Conquest thus was to strengthen every tendency that was already in being—and such tendencies have been powerfully at work ever since the beginning of the growth of the thegnhood—by which the king, his authority, his officers, took the place of the nation and its authority. Thus, for instance, there was a strong tendency at work to turn the folkland, the land of the nation, into the land of the king. To this process the Conquest gave the finishing touch. The stroke by which the whole lay soil of England was held to be forfeited to the Conqueror turned all folkland into terra regis. From Domesday onward the folkland vanishes. And while the king, the highest lord, was thus encroaching on the nation, that is, on the community which took in all others, smaller lords were doing the like to the lesser communities which made up the nation. Under the older system all grants of *sac* and *soc*, that is, all grants to a particular person of any special jurisdiction, exempt from the ordinary local courts, were in their own nature exceptional. As the new ideas grew, the manor, as it was called by the Normans, finally supplanted the township.

Both as regarded the greater lord and the lesser, the tendency of the ideas which the Norman Conquest strongly confirmed was to put the notion of property before the notion of office. Kingship, the highest office in the commonwealth, came to be looked on mainly as a possession. The king of the people has now put on the character of the lord of the land; his title gradually changes into a form which better expresses this new position. The king of the English gradually changes into the king of England. William himself is still almost always *rex Anglorum*. But the new territorial title now begins to creep into use, and from the beginning of the thirteenth century it altogether displaces the older style. But the new ideas did much more than merely change the royal style. As soon as office had changed into property, as soon as the chief of the people had changed into the lord of the land, the old rule that the king should be chosen out of the one kingly house began to stiffen into the doctrine of strict hereditary right. The general results of the Conquest were all in favour of that doctrine; but the circumstances of the reigns which immediately followed the Conquest all told the other way, and helped to keep up the elective character of the crown for some time longer. The ancient doctrine died out very slowly, but it did die out in the end. And then lawyers found out that the crown had been hereditary from the beginning, and ruled that the king never died, and that the throne never could be vacant. The doctrine of primogeniture also now naturally supplanted the old principle of division of lands. No doctrine could be more opposite to the old doctrine of nobility than the doctrine which gave everything to a single son in the family.

Ecclesiastical and Social Changes

The immediate ecclesiastical effects of the Norman Conquest, those which in truth formed part of the process of conquest, have been already spoken of. But the introduction of foreign prelates, and the closer relations with Rome, worked in many ways. The foreign bishop naturally stood at a greater distance from the native clergy than his English predecessor had done. Moreover, the new theories as to the tenure of land turned the bishop into a baron, holding as a tenant-in-chief of the crown. The bishop became in his own diocese more of a lord and less of a father, while he was often kept away from his diocese by holding high temporal office. It gives a false view of the case to say that the prelates grasped at high temporal office; the case rather is that, in a time when education was chiefly confined to the clergy, public business was mainly in the hands of the king's clerks, and that they received bishoprics as the reward of their temporal services. Under such bishops the church was secularised and feudalised. The relation of the parish priest to his bishop put on the likeness of the relation between a man and his lord.

The social results of the Conquest were such as naturally followed on the general transfer of the greatest estates and highest offices of the country. The Conquest itself, the military occupation of William, was followed by a peaceful immigration of Normans and other strangers into England, especially into the merchant towns. London, above all, received a crowd of citizens of Norman birth. That these men, and the Norman settlers generally, turned into Englishmen in a wonderfully short time is one of the great features of our history. The causes are easy to see: with most men, if there be no special reason to the contrary, place of birth goes for more than descent by blood, and the stranger is gradually assimilated by the people among whom he dwells. And in the case of Normans and English, we can hardly doubt that original kindred went for something. The Norman was simply a Dane who had adopted the French tongue and some French fashions; he was easily won back into the Teutonic fold. The Norman settled in England was driven to become in some sort an Englishman. He held his estates of the king of the English, according to English law. The fusion of the two races was so speedy that a writer little more than a hundred years after the Conquest, the author of the famous *Dialogus de Scaccario*, could say that, among the free population, it was impossible to tell who was of Norman and who was of English birth. That is to say, the great nobles must still have been all but purely Norman; the lowest classes must have been all but purely English. In the intermediate classes, among the townsmen and the smaller landowners, the two races were so intermixed, and they had so modified one another, that the distinction between them had been forgotten. We might say that the effect of the Norman Conquest was to thrust every class, save one, of the older English society a step downwards. The churl, the simple freeman, had been gradually sinking for a long time before the Conquest. In the course of the century after the Conquest, he finally sank into the villein. On the other hand, if the churl gradually sank into the state of villeinage, the slave gradually rose to it. The Norman Conquest, while thrusting down every other class, undoubtedly helped to raise the most wretched and helpless class of all.

But while the Normans who settled in England changed into Englishmen with remarkable speed, they of course, by the very fact of their fusion, did much to modify the character of Englishmen. A way was now opened for all that

class of ideas which, for want of better names, may be called feudal and chivalrous. Chivalry is rather French than Norman; and its development comes rather under the Angevin than under the Norman kings. Still, so far as Normandy was influenced by France, so far as the Norman Conquest opened a way for French influence, and, we may add, French kings, in England, so far this whole class of ideas and feelings may be set down as results of the Norman Conquest. But in England chivalry never was really dominant. Teutonic notions of right and common sense were never wholly driven out. For the man unassisted by birth to rise was harder in some ages than in others. There was no age in England when it was wholly impossible.[c]

THE ACCESSION OF WILLIAM RUFUS

William Rufus, or William the Red, who left his father at the point of death, was informed of his decease as he was on the point of embarking at Wissant, near Calais. The news only made him the more anxious to reach England, that he might, by the actual seizure of the succession, set at defiance the pretensions of any other claimant to the crown. Arriving in England, he secured the important fortresses of Dover, Pevensey, and Hastings, concealing his father's death, and pretending to be the bearer of orders from him. He then hastened to Winchester, where, with a proper conviction of the efficacy of money, he claimed his father's treasures, which were deposited in the castle there. William de Pont-de-l'Arche, the royal treasurer, readily delivered him the keys, and Rufus took possession of £60,000 in pure silver, with much gold and many precious stones.

His next step was to repair to Lanfranc, the primate, in whose hands the destinies of the kingdom may almost be said to have at that moment been. Bloet, a confidential messenger, had already delivered a letter from the deceased king, commending the cause and guidance of his son William to the archbishop, already disposed by motives both of affection and self-interest in favour of William, who had been his pupil, and for whom he had performed the sacred ceremonies on his initiation into knighthood. It is stated, however, that Lanfranc refused to declare himself in favour of Rufus till that prince promised, upon oath, to govern according to law and right, and to ask and follow the advice of the primate in all matters of importance. It appears that Lanfranc then proceeded with as much activity as Rufus could desire. He first hastily summoned a council of the prelates and barons, to give the semblance of a free election.[1] Though a strong feeling of opposition existed, none was shown at this meeting; and Lanfranc crowned his pupil at Westminster, on Sunday, the 26th of September, 1087, the seventeenth day after the Conqueror's death.

William's first act of royal authority was the imprisonment of the unfortunate Englishmen whom his father had liberated on his death-bed. Earls Morcar and Wulfnoth, who had followed him to England in the hope of obtaining some part of the estates of their fathers, were arrested at Winchester and confined in the castle. He then gave a quantity of gold and silver, a part of the treasure found at Winchester, to "Otho, the goldsmith," with orders to work it into ornaments for the tomb of that father whom he had abandoned on his death-bed.

[1 "Of any election to the crown," says Ramsay*i*, "nothing is said. Some form of the sort may have been gone through. But at any rate the appeal to the people in the coronation office would preserve the memory of the constitutional doctrine."]

[1087-1088 A.D.]

When Robert Courte-heuse heard of his father's death, he was living, an impoverished exile, at Abbeville. He, however, soon appeared in Normandy, and was joyfully received at Rouen, the capital, and recognised as their duke by the prelates, barons, and chief men. Henry, the youngest brother of the three, put himself and his five thousand pounds of silver in a place of safety, waiting events, and ready to seize every chance of gaining either the royal crown or the ducal coronet.

It was not perhaps easy for the Conqueror to make any better arrangement, but it was in the highest degree unlikely, under the division he had made of England and Normandy, that peace should be preserved between the brothers. Even if the unscrupulous Rufus had been less active, and the personal qualities of Robert altogether different from what they were, causes independent of the two princes threatened to lead to inevitable hostilities. The great barons, the followers of the Conqueror, were almost all possessed of estates and fiefs in both countries: they were naturally uneasy at the separation of the two territories, and foresaw that it would be impossible for them to preserve their allegiance to two masters, and that they must very soon resign or lose either their ancient patrimonies in Normandy, or their new acquisitions in England. A war between the two brothers would at any time embarrass them as long as they held territory under both. Every inducement of interest and of local attachment made them wish to see the two countries united under one sovereign; and their only great difference of opinion on this head was as to which of the two brothers should be that sovereign.

A decision of the question was inevitable; and the first step was taken, not in Normandy, to expel Robert, but in England, to dethrone William. Had he been left to himself, the elder brother, from his love of ease and pleasure, would in all probability have remained satisfied with his duchy, but he was beset on all sides by men who were constantly repeating how unjust and disgraceful to him it was to see a younger brother possess a kingdom while he had only a duchy; by Norman nobles that went daily over to him complaining of the present state of affairs in England; and by his uncle Odo, the bishop, who moved with all his ancient energy and fierceness in the matter, not so much out of any preference of one brother to the other, as out of his hatred of the primate Lanfranc, whom he considered as the chief cause of the disgrace, the imprisonment, and all the misfortunes that had befallen him in the latter years of the Conqueror.[d]

THE REVOLT OF ODO

According to custom the king held his court at the festival of Easter. The discontented barons employed the opportunity to mature their plans, and departed to raise the standard of rebellion in their respective districts. The duke of Normandy was already acquainted with their intention; but instead of waiting for his arrival, or of uniting their forces against their enemy, they contented themselves with fortifying their castles and ravaging the king's lands in the neighbourhood.

In this emergency William owed the preservation of his crown to the native English, whose eagerness to revenge the wrongs which their country had received from the Norman chieftains led them in crowds to the royal standard. The earl bishop, Odo, conceiving that the first attempt of his nephew would be directed against the strong castle of Rochester, had in-

trusted that fortress to the care of Eustace, count of Boulogne, with a garrison of five hundred knights; and retiring to Pevensey, awaited with impatience the promised arrival of Robert. The king followed him thither, shut him up within the walls, and after a siege of seven weeks compelled him to surrender. His life and liberty were granted him on the condition that he should swear to deliver up the castle of Rochester, and to quit England forever. Odo was conducted with a small escort to the fortress: but Eustace easily discerned the contradiction between his words and his looks, and pretending that he was a traitor to the cause, made both the bishop and his guard prisoners. The success of this artifice inflamed the indignation of William: messengers were despatched to hasten reinforcements; and the place was vigorously attacked, and as obstinately defended, till the ravages of a pestilential disease compelled the count of Boulogne to propose a capitulation. It was with difficulty that the Normans in the king's service prevailed on him to spare the lives of the garrison; but the request of Odo, that at his departure the besiegers should abstain from every demonstration of triumph, was contemptuously refused. The moment he appeared, the trumpets were ordered to flourish; and as he passed through the ranks, the English sounded the words "halter" and "gallows" in his ears. He slunk away, muttering threats of vengeance, and embarking on board the first vessel he could procure, directed his course to Normandy.

The hopes of the insurgents were now at an end. The characteristic indolence of Robert had caused him to procrastinate his voyage to England till the favourable opportunity had passed away; and the scanty succours which he had sent to his partisans had been intercepted by the English mariners. The principal insurgents, reduced to despair, escaped to Normandy: their estates were divided among the faithful friends of the king.

THE WARS IN NORMANDY

Normandy at this period presented a wide scene of anarchy and violence. Robert held the reins of government with a feeble grasp, and his lenity and indecision exposed him to the contempt of his turbulent barons. The Conqueror had compelled them to admit his troops into their castles; but, at his death, they expelled the royal garrisons, levied forces, and made war on each other. The new duke would not, or dared not, interfere. He consumed his revenue in his pleasures, and by improvident grants diminished the ducal demesnes. His poverty compelled him to solicit the assistance of Henry, to whom he sold for three thousand pounds the Cotentin, almost the third part of the duchy; and his jealousy induced him to order the arrest and confinement of the same prince, as soon as he returned from England, where he had gone to claim the dower of his mother Matilda. To William, who sought to be revenged on Robert, and who never refused to employ the aid of bribery or fraud, this disturbed state of things offered an alluring prospect; and, by means of a judicious distribution of presents, he obtained through the perfidy of his Norman adherents possession of St. Valery, of Albemarle, and of almost every fortress on the right bank of the Seine. Alarmed at so dangerous a defection, the duke solicited the interference of the king of France, who marched a powerful army to the confines of Normandy, but on the receipt of a considerable sum from England returned into his own dominions.

At the same time Robert nearly lost Rouen, the capital of Normandy. Conan, the wealthiest and most powerful of the citizens, had engaged to

[1090-1091 A.D.]

deliver it up to William; and the duke, to defeat the project, solicited the aid of Henry, whom he had lately released. On the third of November Gilbert de l'Aigle was seen to the south of the city leading a body of men to the assistance of Robert; while Rainald de Warrenne appeared on the north with three hundred knights in the service of the king of England. The adherents of Conan instantly divided to receive their friends, and repulse their foes; Robert and Henry (who were now reconciled) descended from the castle with their followers; and the streets of the city were filled with confusion and bloodshed. So doubtful was the issue that the duke, at the request of his friends, withdrew to a place of safety; but at last the English were expelled, and Conan was conducted a captive into the fortress. By Robert he was condemned to perpetual confinement; but Henry, who was well acquainted with the lenity of his brother, requested and obtained the custody of the prisoner. He immediately led him to the highest tower, bade him survey the beauty of the surrounding scenery, and then, seizing him by the waist, hurled him over the battlements. The unhappy Conan was dashed to pieces; the prince turning to the bystanders coolly observed that treason ought never to go unpunished.

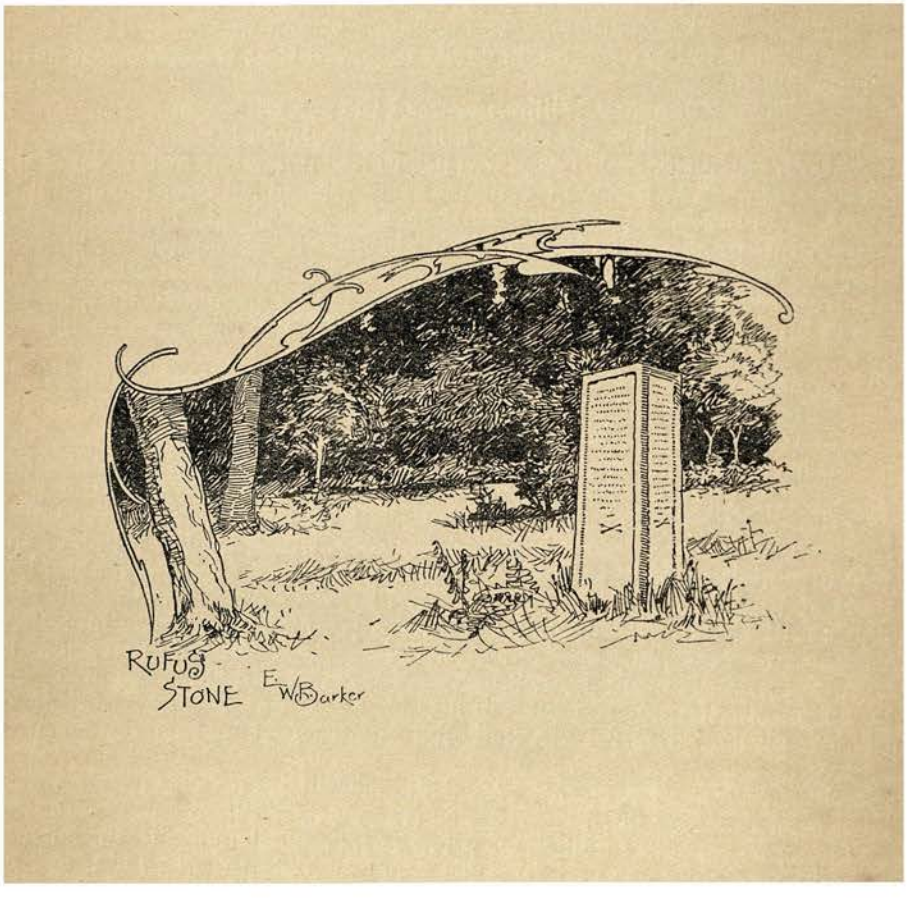
In the following January William crossed the sea with a numerous army, but the barons who held lands under both the brothers laboured to effect a reconciliation, and a treaty of peace was negotiated under the mediation of the French monarch. The policy of William again triumphed over the credulity of Robert. He retained possession of the fortresses which he had acquired in Normandy, but promised to indemnify his brother by an equivalent in England, and to restore to their estates his friends, who had been attainted for the late insurrection. By an additional article it was stipulated that, on the decease of either of the two princes, the survivor should succeed to his dominions.

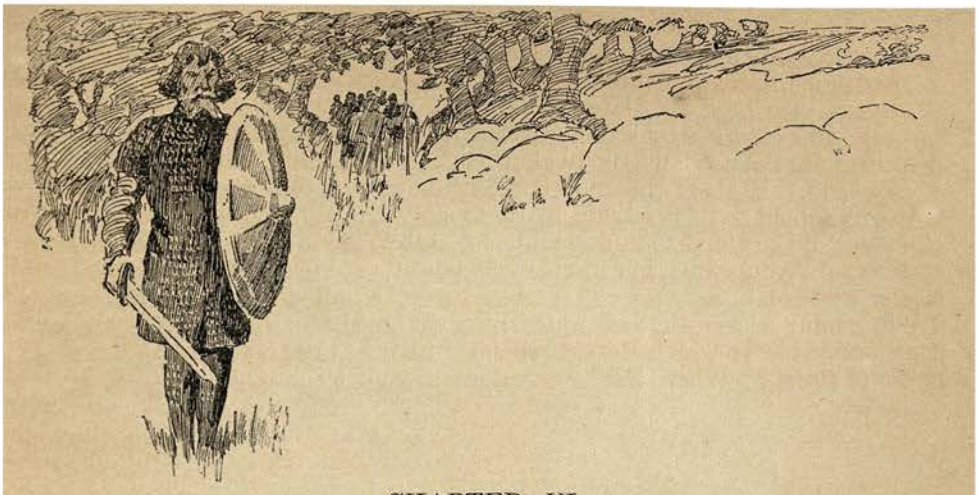
The principal sufferers by this treaty were Eadgar Ætheling and Prince Henry. Eadgar had been the confidential friend of Robert; but at the demand of William he was deprived of his estates in Normandy, and compelled to seek an asylum with his brother-in-law, the king of Scotland. The abilities and pretensions of Henry had long been subjects of alarm to both the king and the duke. They now united their forces, took possession of his castles, and besieged him on Mont St. Michel, a lofty rock, which by the influx of the tide was insulated twice in the day. The place was deemed impregnable; but the want of water caused it to be evacuated by the garrison at the end of a fortnight; and Henry with difficulty obtained permission to retire into Brittany. For two years he wandered in the Vexin, suffering the privations of poverty, and attended only by a knight, a chaplain, and three esquires. At length he accepted from the inhabitants of Domfront the government of their town, and gradually recovered the greater part of his former possessions.

The siege of Mont St. Michel was distinguished by an occurrence which has been celebrated by our historians as a proof of William's magnanimity. Riding alone, he espied at a distance a few cavaliers belonging to the enemy, whom he immediately charged with his usual intrepidity. In the shock he was beaten to the ground; and his horse, which had been wounded, dragged him some paces in the stirrup. His adversary had already raised his sword to take the life of the fallen monarch, when William exclaimed: "Hold, fellow! I am the king of England." Awed by his voice, his opponents raised him from the ground; a fresh horse was offered him; and the king, vaulting into the saddle, inquired which of them was his conqueror. The man apologised

for his ignorance. "Make no excuse," replied William, "you are a brave and worthy knight. Henceforth you shall fight under my banner."[k]

Another incident of the same siege which illustrates the good-heartedness of Robert is related by Malmesbury.[e] At one time water ran short in the fortress, and Henry sent a messenger to Robert expostulating with him and declaring that it was wrong to deprive him of water, "the common right of mankind." Robert was moved, and gave orders that the vigilance of the besiegers should be relaxed sufficiently to allow the garrison to obtain a supply of water. When Robert's action was related to William Rufus, he was enraged, and scornfully taunted his kind-hearted brother with lacking a knowledge of the customs of warfare. "How can you expect to conquer an enemy if you supply him with that which he most needs to continue the strife?" he demanded. To which Robert replied: "Shame! Shall I suffer our brother to die of thirst? Where shall we find another, if we lose him?"[a]





CHAPTER VI

THE SONS OF THE CONQUEROR AND STEPHEN

[1087–1154 A.D.]

THE problem was to reconcile the English nation to the Norman Conquest, to nationalise, so to speak, the Conquest and the dynasty which the Conquest had brought in. The means thereto was to find a prince of the foreign stock who should reign as an English king, with the good-will of the English people, in the interest of the English people. William Rufus might have held that place if he had been morally capable of it. His crown was won for him from Norman rebels by the valour and loyalty of Englishmen. But Rufus forsook his trust; he belied his promises. Thirteen years later the same drama was acted over again. Henry, who reigned by a more direct choice of the English people than William, owed his crown also to the loyalty of Englishmen. This time the problem was solved. After the election at Winchester, the fight at Tinchebray, England could no longer be called a conquered land. Though the Norman was to reign in England, he was to reign only by putting on the character of an English king, called to his throne by the voice of Englishmen, and guarded there by their loyalty against the plots and assaults of Norman rebels.—FREEMAN. *p*

BY what pretexts the king eluded the execution of his treaty with Robert we are ignorant. It was in vain that the duke accompanied him to England to receive the promised indemnity; in vain that he repeated his demand by successive messengers.[b] At last, in 1094, Robert had recourse to a measure deemed very efficacious in the court of chivalry. He sent two heralds, who, having found their way into the presence of the Red King, denounced him before his chief vassals as a false and perjured knight, with whom his brother, the duke, would no longer hold friendship. To defend his honour, the king followed the two heralds to Normandy, where, hoping at least for the majority of voices, he agreed to submit the matter in dispute to the arbitration of the twenty-four barons, who had sworn to do their best to enforce the faithful observance of the treaty of Caen. The barons, however, decided in favour of Robert; and then William appealed to the sword. The campaign went so

much in favour of the Red King, that Robert was again obliged to apply for assistance to the king of France; and Philip once more marched with an army into Normandy.

Rufus then sustained some serious losses; and trusting no longer to the appeal of the sword, he resolved to buy off the French king. He sent his commission into England for the immediate levying of 20,000 men. By the time appointed these men came together about Hastings, and were ready to embark, "when suddenly there came his lieutenant with a counter-order, and signified to them that the king, minding to favour them, and spare them for that journey, would that every of them should give him ten shillings towards the charges of the war, and thereupon depart home with a sufficient safe-conduct; which the most part were better content to do than to commit themselves to the fortune of the sea and bloody success of the wars in Normandy." The king's lieutenant and representative in this cunning device was Ranulf Flambard. Some considerable sum was raised, and King Philip accepted it and withdrew from the field, leaving Robert, as he had done before, to shift for himself.[d]

WILLIAM RUFUS
[1056–1100 A.D.]

At this time Robert was filled with a great desire to join the crusade of Peter the Hermit. But with so much splendour were the western princes arming themselves for the war in defence of the Holy Sepulchre, that Robert found his poverty an obstacle for which his devoutness of heart could not atone. However, burning with ardour for the enterprise, he finally had recourse to the avarice of William Rufus, to whom he offered, for the sum of 10,000 marks, the government of his dominions during the five following years.[a] The proposal was instantly accepted. William summoned a great council, and, alleging his poverty, appealed to the generosity of his faithful barons; they, on their return home, required in the same manner the aid of their tenants; and the whole amount, wrung in reality from the lower orders in the state, was paid into the exchequer, and transmitted to Normandy. Robert departed with a joyful heart in quest of dangers and glory; William sailed to the Continent, and demanded immediate possession of Normandy and of Le Maine.

By the Normans he was received without opposition; the Manceaux unanimously rejected his authority in favour of Hélie de la Flêche. Though Hélie had taken the cross, the claims and menaces of William detained him at home; but one day, having incautiously entered a wood with no more than seven knights, he was made prisoner; and the king immediately marched at the head of fifty thousand horsemen into his territories. Fulk [of Anjou] had already arrived to protect his vassal; a few skirmishes were succeeded by a negotiation; and Hélie obtained his liberty by the surrender of Mans. Being

[1099 A.D.]

thus dispossessed of his dominions, he offered his services to William; but at the instigation of Robert of Meulan, they were indignantly refused. "If you will not have me for a friend," exclaimed Hélie, "you shall learn to fear me as an enemy."

The next summer (1099) William was hunting in the New Forest in Hampshire, when a messenger arrived to inform him that Hélie had defeated the Normans and surprised the city of Mans; that the inhabitants had again acknowledged him for their count; and that the garrison, shut up in the castle, would soon be reduced to extremity. The impatience of the king could hardly wait for the conclusion of the tale, when, crying out to his attendants, "Let those that love me, follow," he rode precipitately to the sea-shore, and embarked in the first vessel which he found. The master remonstrated that the weather was stormy and the passage dangerous. "Hold thy peace," said William, "kings are never drowned." He landed the next day at Barfleur, assembled his troops, and advanced with such rapidity that Hélie could scarcely find time to save himself by flight. The king ravaged the lands of his enemies, and returned to England.

WARS WITH THE SCOTS AND WELSH (1091–1095 A.D.)

Of the hostilities between England and Scotland the blame must rest with the king of Scots, who lost his life in the contest. William was in Normandy prosecuting his designs against Robert, when Malcolm suddenly crossed the frontiers and gratified the rapacity of his followers with the spoil of the northern counties. After the reconciliation of the two brothers, the king of England undertook to revenge the insult. His fleet was dispersed in a storm; but his cavalry traversed the Lothians, and penetrated as far as the great river, which the Scots called "the water." The hostile armies were ranged on the opposite shores; and the two kings had mutually defied each other, when a peace was concluded through the mediation of Robert of Normandy on the one side, and of Eadgar Ætheling on the other. Malcolm submitted to do homage to the English monarch, and to render him the services which he had rendered to William's father; and William engaged to grant to the Scottish king the twelve manors, and the annual pension of twelve marks of gold, which he had enjoyed under the Conqueror. Nor was the interest of the Ætheling forgotten in the negotiation. He was permitted to return to England, and obtained a distinguished place in the court of William.

William on his return visited Carlisle, expelled the lord of the district, peopled the city with a colony of Englishmen from the southern counties, and built a castle for their protection. It is possible that, as Cumberland was formerly held by the heir of the Scottish crown, Malcolm might consider the settlement of an English colony at Carlisle as an invasion of his rights; it is certain that a new quarrel was created between the two nations, of which we know not the origin nor the particulars. The Scottish king was invited or summoned to attend William's court at Gloucester (1093), and at his arrival found himself excluded from the royal presence, unless he would consent to plead his cause, and submit to the judgment of the English barons. Malcolm indignantly rejected the proposal. The kings of Scotland, he said, had never been accustomed "to do right" to the kings of England but on the borders of the two realms, and according to the joint decision of the barons of both countries. He retired in anger, assembled his retainers, and burst with a numerous force into Northumberland, where he perished, a victim to the wiles

of his enemy, perhaps to the treachery of his own subjects. The Scottish army was surprised by Robert de Mowbray. Malcolm fell by the sword of Morel, Mowbray's steward; his eldest son Edward shared the fate of his father; and of the fugitives who escaped the pursuit of their foes, the greater number were lost in the waters of the Alne and the Tweed. The bodies of the king and his son were found by peasants, and brought by them for burial to the abbey of Tynemouth. The mournful intelligence hastened the death of his consort, Queen Margaret, who survived her husband only four days.[1]

The children of Malcolm, too young to assert their rights, sought the protection of their uncle, Eadgar Ætheling, in England; and the Scottish sceptre was seized (1094) by the ambition of Donald Bain, the brother of the deceased monarch. He found a competitor in Duncan, a son, perhaps illegitimate, of Malcolm, who had long resided as an hostage in the English court. The nephew, with the aid of William, to whom he swore fealty, proved too strong for the uncle; and Donald secreted himself in the Highlands, till the murder of Duncan by Malpeder, Mormaer of Mearns, replaced in his hands the reins of government. He held them only three years. The Ætheling by order of the English king conducted an army into Scotland, seated his nephew Edgar [the son of Margaret] on the throne, as feudatory to William, and restored the children of his sister Margaret to their former honours. Donald, who had been taken in his flight and committed to prison, died of grief.

Ever since Harold had effected the reduction of Wales, the natives had acknowledged themselves the vassals of the king of England; but their ancient hostility was not yet extinguished, and the prospect of plunder, with the chance of impunity, led them repeatedly to ravage the neighbouring counties. To repress their inroads the Conqueror had ordered castles to be built on the borders, which he intrusted to the care of officers, denominated marquesses, or lords of the marches. These marches were the constant theatre of predatory warfare and barbarian revenge. But in 1094 the natives of every district in Wales rose in arms: the Isle of Anglesea was reduced; and Cheshire, Shropshire, and Herefordshire, from one extremity to the other, were desolated with fire and sword. The next year the insurgents surprised the castle of Montgomery and massacred the inhabitants. The resentment of William urged him to retaliate; and, in imitation of Harold, he undertook to traverse the whole principality at the head of an army.

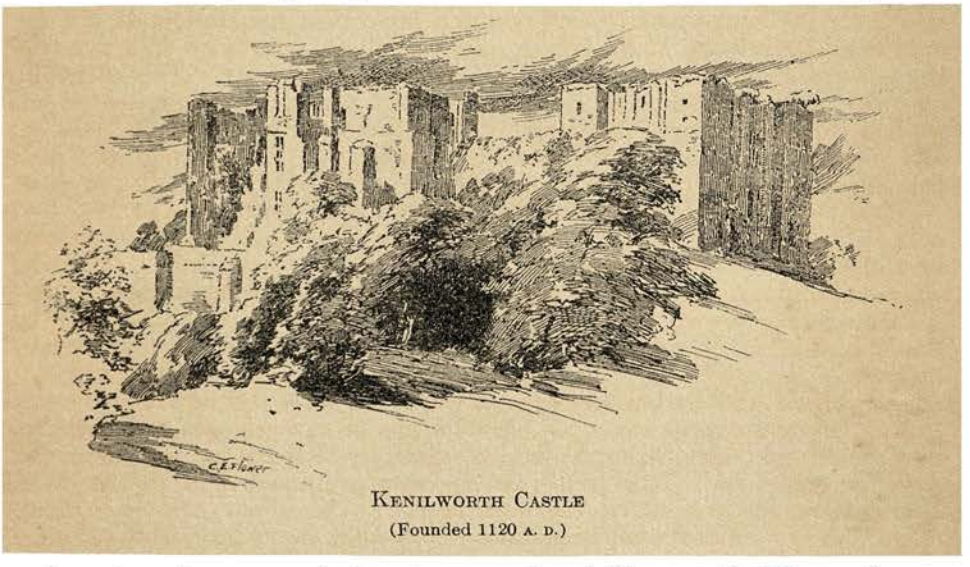
But the heavy cavalry of the Normans was ill adapted to the invasion of a rugged and mountainous country. The Welsh had the wisdom not to oppose his progress; but they hovered on his flanks, drove forward his rear, and cut off his detachments; and when the king, after a slow and tedious march of five weeks, had reached the mountains of Snowdon, he found to his mortification that the loss of the conquerors exceeded that of the vanquished. The next year (1095) the lords of the marches prosecuted the war by ravaging the lands in the neighbourhood; and the following summer the king resumed his operations, but with similar results. The loss of men, of horses, and of baggage, convinced him of the inutility of the enterprise. He retired out of Wales in despair, adopted the policy of his father, and by drawing a chain of castles round the country, endeavoured to put a stop to the incursions of these restless and inaccessible enemies.

[1] The Scottish historians pretend that Malcolm was killed at the siege of Alnwick by the perfidy of the governor, who, pretending to offer him the keys of the place at the end of a spear, pushed the spear into his brain. It may be granted that there was something of fraud or treachery in the transaction; but the Scottish account seems inconsistent with the fact that the bodies of Malcolm and Edward were found on the ground by peasants, and buried by them at Tynemouth, a considerable distance from Alnwick.

MOWBRAY'S REBELLION

The most powerful of the Anglo-Norman barons was Robert de Mowbray, earl of Northumberland. He had inherited from his uncle, the bishop of Coutances, no fewer than two hundred and eighty manors: the first families in the nation were allied to him by blood or affinity; and his command in the north had placed at his disposal the services of a numerous and warlike population. By his orders four Norwegian merchantmen of considerable value had been detained and plundered; and when the king, at the petition of the owners, summoned him to answer for the offence, the royal mandate was repeatedly slighted and disobeyed.[1]

William undertook to chastise his vassal; his rapidity disconcerted the friends of the earl; the principal of the Northumbrian chieftains were surprised



KENILWORTH CASTLE
(Founded 1120 A. D.)

and made prisoners; and the strong castle of Tynemouth [Newcastle-on-Tyne], after a siege of two months, was compelled to surrender. Still from the walls of Bamborough Mowbray continued to defy the arms of his sovereign; nor did William undertake the hopeless task of reducing that impregnable fortress; but in the vicinity erected another castle, which he appropriately denominated Malvoisin, or the bad neighbour. At length the earl was decoyed from his asylum. An insidious offer to betray into his hands the town of Newcastle induced him to quit Bamborough in the dead of the night with no more than thirty horsemen. The garrison of Malvoisin immediately followed; the gates of Newcastle were shut; and the earl fled from his pursuers to the monastery of St. Oswine. During five days he valiantly

[1 The earl's seizure of the Norwegian ships could not in itself have been sufficient cause for the king to lead an army against him. But it served at least as an excuse. Ramsay, holding this view, points out that the morality of the seas in those days, and at a very much later date, was very lax. "The plunder of merchant shipping on a distant shore would not from a political point of view," he says, "seem a very serious offence. We would rather suppose that the king, aware that mischief was brewing, seized the opportunity of bringing Mowbray to book. Again, Mowbray's reluctance to come to court implied a consciousness of some guilt deeper than that involved in the offence for which he was called to account."]

defended himself against the repeated assaults of a superior enemy; on the sixth he was wounded in the leg, and made prisoner.

The captive, by the royal order, was conducted to Bamborough, and his countess Matilda was invited to a parley. From the walls she beheld her lord in bonds, with the executioner by his side, prepared to put out his eyes if she refused to surrender the fortress. Her affection (they had been married only three months) subdued her repugnance; the gates were thrown open; and Morel, the governor, to ingratiate himself with the conqueror, revealed the particulars of an extensive and dangerous conspiracy to place on the throne Stephen of Aumale—[nephew of the Conqueror and] brother to Judith of infamous memory. Hugh, earl of Shrewsbury, purchased his pardon for three thousand pounds; Walter de Lacy escaped to the Continent; Odo, earl of Holderness, forfeited his estates and was imprisoned; Mowbray himself was condemned to perpetual confinement, and lived nearly thirty years in the castle of Windsor. William, count of Eu, a near relation of the king, fought his accuser, was vanquished, and lost his eyes. William of Alderi, the king's godfather, was sentenced to be hanged; but the integrity of his life and his asseverations at the gallows convinced the public that he was innocent.[b]

RALPH FLAMBARD

Lanfranc's death (1089) was mourned as the heaviest loss which could befall England. Lanfranc had been placed over the British churches, an alien, yet he lived to become the protector of the English people. Strange in blood to the Norman, strange in blood to the Englishman, both now loved him as their kinsman: his station and disposition combined to render him the mediator between the conquerors and subjugated. So long as Lanfranc lived, Rufus had, in all open and public affairs, been guided by his counsel. His proud and angry temper, though not completely restrained, was mitigated and sweetened by Lanfranc's kindly intervention. But Lanfranc's death released him from all control.[q] Lanfranc had been both primate and chief minister. At his death, the see of Canterbury was for some time left vacant and its rich revenues turned into the coffers of the king. And the man who undoubtedly suggested to the king this means of increasing his wealth was himself appointed the successor of Lanfranc as chief minister.

This man was Ralph or Ranulf, one of the chaplains of the royal household. He was born of mean parentage in Bayeux, and entered the church as the only possible avenue in that time through which a poor man might reach a position of influence or power. He probably crossed the Channel to England in the time of Edward the Confessor. After the Conquest he seems to have prospered, for in *Domesday* we find him recorded as the holder of lands in Oxford and Hampshire. From certain remarks in contemporary writers it seems likely that he had a hand in the compilation of *Domesday*, and from what we know of his organising ability, it is even possible that he directed the work. Indeed, a passage in Ordericus Vitalis[g] even seems to point to him as having suggested the undertaking. From the service of the bishop of London he had been transferred to that of the Conqueror, where his cleverness, his genius for administration, his handsome person and good fellowship won for him friends and rapid promotion. It was either at that time or later that he was given by Robert, the dispenser of the king's household, the significant name of Flambard—"the fiery or devouring torch." He was

a man after Rufus' own heart, and as soon as Lanfranc was out of the way he was advanced to the post of greatest authority in the kingdom, next to the king. To the positions of justiciar and royal treasurer, in which he had supreme control over both the judicial and financial affairs of the kingdom, was added, during the king's absences on the Continent, that of regent.[a]

FEUDAL INNOVATIONS OF FLAMBARD

None of the three reigns [of the sons and grandson of the Conqueror] was a time of great legislative changes, but the reigns of Rufus and Henry were the time in which the new system of administration grew up. Under Rufus the doctrine of military tenures, and of the incidents consequent on such tenures, was put into systematic shape by his rapacious minister Ralph Flambard. This man is distinctly charged with having first subjected ecclesiastical property to these burthens, and there can be little doubt that it was he who laid them on lay property also. The evidence is this. Under the Conqueror we see the germs and beginnings of certain usages, but nothing more. At the accession of Henry I they appear in a systematic shape as established usages. The feudal burthens were a logical deduction from the doctrine of military tenure. The land is held of the lord on condition of certain services being rendered. It passes from father to son; but in order that each successive tenant may strictly hold it as a grant from the lord, the heir must receive it again. For the new grant he must pay a relief, the price of the *relevatio*, the taking up again, of the estate which has lapsed to the lord.

But it may be that the heir is from age or sex incompetent to discharge the services due to the lord. In the case of the minor heir, the lord takes the fief into his own hands till the heir is of age to discharge them. The heiress can never discharge them in person; she must discharge them through a husband. But the interests of the lord require that she shall marry only with his approval, lest she should carry the fief into the hands of an enemy. All these occasions were turned by the perverse ingenuity of Ralph Flambard into means for increasing the royal revenue. The wardship—that is, the temporary possession of the minor's estate—might be granted or sold. So might the marriage of the heiress. The lord might either sell her and her estate for money, or else he might take money from the heiress herself for leave to marry according to her own inclinations. So with bishoprics and abbeys: Flambard found out that they too were held of the king by military service. During the vacancy of the benefice there was no one to discharge the service; the king therefore took temporary possession of the ecclesiastical estate. And, as the new prelate could not be chosen without the royal consent, the king might prolong that temporary possession as long as he chose. All these inferences were logically drawn out and sternly carried into practice by the minister of Rufus. The claims went on, to the oppression and sorrow of successive generations of heirs and heiresses, till, as regards lay tenures, the whole system was swept away by the famous Act of Charles II.[n]

Stubbs[h] is most uncompromising in his condemnation of the policy of Flambard, whose chief aim, he declares, seemed to be to find a way to gain control of all feudatories, whether temporary or spiritual, with no choice between the two, except indeed as the ecclesiastical fief made the easier prey because the bishop would leave no direct heir who could become importunate in demanding his inheritance. In the carrying out of his aims, Ralph did not

scruple in the least to interfere with the operations of the courts; in short, there were no limits or restrictions placed upon his policy by any considerations of right and wrong.[a]

WILLIAM RUFUS AND ANSELM

After the death of Lanfranc the king retained in his own hands the revenues of Canterbury, as he did those of many other vacant bishoprics: but, falling into a dangerous sickness, the clergy represented to him that he was in danger of eternal perdition, if before his death he did not make atonement for those multiplied sacrileges of which he had been guilty. He resolved, therefore, to supply instantly the vacancy of Canterbury; and sent for Anselm, a Piedmontese by birth, abbot of Bec in Normandy, who was much celebrated for his learning and piety. The abbot earnestly refused the dignity, fell on his knees, wept, and entreated the king to change his purpose; and when he found the prince obstinate in forcing the pastoral staff upon him, he kept his fist so fast clenched that it required the utmost violence of the bystanders to open it, and force him to receive that ensign of spiritual dignity. William soon after recovered, and returned to his former violence and rapine. He detained in prison several persons whom he had ordered to be freed; he still preyed upon the ecclesiastical benefices; the sale of spiritual dignities continued as open as ever; and he kept possession of a considerable part of the revenues belonging to the see of Canterbury. But he found in Anselm that persevering opposition which he had reason to expect from the ostentatious humility which that prelate had displayed in refusing his promotion.

The opposition made by Anselm was the more dangerous on account of the character of piety which he soon acquired in England, by his great zeal against all abuses, particularly those in dress and ornament. A mode in that age prevailed throughout Europe, both among men and women, to give an enormous length to their shoes, to draw the toe to a sharp point, and to affix to it the figure of a bird's bill, which was turned upwards, and which was often sustained by gold or silver chains tied to the knee. The ecclesiastics took exception to this ornament, which they said was an attempt to belie the Scripture, where it is affirmed that no man can add a cubit to his stature; and they assembled some synods, who absolutely condemned it. But, though the clergy could overturn thrones, and had authority sufficient to send above a million of men on their errand to the deserts of Asia, they could never prevail against these long, pointed shoes: on the contrary, that caprice maintained its ground during several centuries; and, if the clergy had not at last desisted from their persecution of it, it might still have been the prevailing fashion in Europe.

But Anselm was more fortunate in decrying the particular mode which was the object of his aversion. He preached zealously against the long hair and curled locks which were then fashionable among the courtiers; he refused the ashes on Ash Wednesday to those who were so accoutred; and his eloquence had such influence that the young men universally abandoned that ornament, and appeared in the cropped hair that was recommended to them by the primate.

When William's profaneness, therefore, returned to him with his health, he was soon engaged in controversies with this austere prelate. There was at that time a schism in the church between Urban and Clement, who both

[1100 A.D.]

pretended to the papacy; and Anselm, who, as abbot of Bec, had already acknowledged the former, was determined without the king's consent to introduce his authority into England. William, who, imitating his father's example, had prohibited his subjects from recognising any pope whom he had not previously received, was enraged, and summoned a synod at Rockingham, with an intention of deposing Anselm: but the prelate's suffragans declared that, without the papal authority, they knew of no expedient for inflicting that punishment on their primate. The king was at last engaged by other motives to give the preference to Urban's title; Anselm received the pallium from that pontiff; and matters seemed to be accommodated when the quarrel broke out afresh from a new cause.

William had undertaken an expedition against Wales, and required the archbishop to furnish his quota of soldiers; but Anselm, who regarded the demand as an oppression on the church, sent them so miserably accoutred that the king was extremely displeased, and threatened him with a prosecution. Anselm, on the other hand, demanded positively that all the revenues of his see should be restored; appealed to Rome against the king's injustice; and affairs came to such extremities that the primate, finding it dangerous to remain in the kingdom, obtained the king's permission to retire beyond sea. All his temporalities were seized; but he was received with great respect by Urban, who considered him as a martyr in the cause of religion, and even menaced the king with excommunication. Anselm assisted at the council of Bari; where, besides fixing the controversy between the Greek and Latin churches concerning the procession of the Holy Ghost, the right of election to church preferments was declared to belong to the clergy alone; and spiritual censures were denounced against all ecclesiastics who did homage to laymen for their sees or benefices, and against all laymen who exacted it.[c]

DEATH OF WILLIAM RUFUS

William's lavish expenditure continued on the increase; but by his exactions and irregular way of dealing with church property he still found means for gratifying his extravagance, and enjoyed abroad the reputation of being a rich as well as a powerful king. But the dread creditor was now at hand whom even kings cannot escape. Popular superstition had long darkened the shades and solitudes of the New Forest. The fiend himself, it was said, had appeared there, announcing the punishment he had in reserve for the Red King. The accidents that happened in that chase, which had been so barbarously obtained, gave strength to the vulgar belief. In the month of May, Richard, an illegitimate son of Duke Robert, was killed while hunting in the forest, by an arrow reported to have been shot at random. This was the second time the Conqueror's blood had been poured out there, and men said it would not be the last time. On the first of August following, William lay at Malwood-keep, a hunting-seat in the forest, with a goodly train of knights. A reconciliation had taken place between the two brothers, and Henry, who had been some time in England, was of the gay party.

The circumstances of the story, as told by the monkish chroniclers, are sufficiently remarkable. At the dead of night the king was heard invoking the blessed Virgin, a thing strange in him; and then he called aloud for lights. His attendants ran at his call, and found him disturbed by a frightful vision, to prevent the return of which he ordered them to pass the rest of the night by his bedside. As he was dressing in the morning an artisan brought him

six new arrows: he examined them, praised the workmanship, and, keeping four for himself, gave the other two to Sir Walter Tyrrel, otherwise called, from his estates in France, Sir Walter de Poix, saying, as he presented them, "Good weapons are due to the sportsman that knows how to make a good use of them." The tables were spread with an abundant collation, and the Red King ate more meat and drank even more wine than he was wont to do. His spirits rose to their highest pitch. All was boisterously gay, when a messenger arrived from Serlon, the Norman abbot of St. Peter's, at Gloucester, to inform the king that one of his monks had dreamed a dream foreboding a sudden and awful death to him. "The man is a monk," cried Rufus, "and to have a piece of money he dreameth such things. Give him, therefore, an hundred pence, and bid him dream of better fortune to our person." Then turning to Tyrrel, he said, "Do they think I am one of those fools that give up their pleasure or their business because an old woman happens to dream or sneeze?"

The king, with his brother Henry, and many other lords and knights, rode into the forest, where the company dispersed; but Sir Walter, his especial favourite in these sports, remained constantly near the king. As the sun was sinking low in the west, a hart came bounding by, between Rufus and his comrade, who stood concealed in the thickets. The king drew his bow, but the string broke. Startled by the sound, the hart paused. The king, being unprovided with a second bow, shouted, "Shoot, Walter! shoot, in the devil's name!" Tyrrel drew his bow—the arrow departed—was glanced aside in its flight by an intervening tree, and struck William in the left breast. The fork-head pierced his heart, and with one groan, and no word or prayer uttered, the Red King fell, and expired. Sir Walter Tyrrel ran to his master's side, but finding him dead he remounted his horse, and, without informing any one of the catastrophe, galloped to the sea-coast, embarked for Normandy, whence he fled for sanctuary into the dominions of the French king, and soon after departed for the Holy Land.

Late in the evening the royal corpse was found alone, where it fell, by a poor charcoal-burner, who put it, still bleeding, into his cart, and drove towards Winchester. At the earliest report of his death his brother Henry flew to seize the royal treasury; and the knights and favourites who had been hunting in the forest dispersed, in several directions, to look after their interest, not one of them caring to render the last sad honours to their master. The next day the body, still in the charcoal-burner's cart, and defiled with blood and dirt, was carried to St. Swithin's, the cathedral church of Winchester. There it was treated with proper respect, and buried in the centre of the cathedral choir, many persons looking on, but few grieving. A proof of the bad opinion which the people entertained of the deceased monarch is that they interpreted the fall of a certain tower in the cathedral, which happened the following year, and covered his tomb with its ruins, into a sign of the displeasure of heaven that he had received Christian burial.

The second king of the Norman line reigned thirteen years, all but a few weeks, and was full of health and vigour, and only forty years of age, when he died. That he was shot by an arrow in the New Forest, that his body was abandoned and then hastily interred, are facts perfectly well authenticated; but some doubts may be entertained as to the precise circumstances attending his death, notwithstanding their being minutely related by writers who were living at the time, or who flourished in the course of the following century. Sir Walter Tyrrel afterwards swore, in France, that he did not shoot the arrow; but he was probably anxious to relieve himself from the odium of killing a king, even by accident. It is quite possible, indeed, that the event did not arise

from chance, and that Tyrrel had no part in it. The remorseless ambition of Henry might have had recourse to murder, or the avenging shaft might have been sped by the desperate hand of some Englishman, tempted by a favourable opportunity and the traditions of the place. But the most charitable construction is that the party were intoxicated with the wine they had drunk at Malwood-keep, and that, in the confusion consequent on drunkenness, the king was hit by a random arrow.[d]

THE CHARACTER OF WILLIAM RUFUS

William of Malmesbury,[e] who was born in the reign of William Rufus, gives this graphic description of him: "Greatness of soul was pre-eminent in the king, which, in process of time, he obscured by excessive severity—vices, indeed, in place of virtues, so insensibly crept into his bosom that he could not distinguish them. At last, however, in his later years, the desire after good grew cold, and the crop of evil increased to ripeness; his liberality became prodigality; his magnanimity, pride; his austerity, cruelty. He was, when abroad, and in public assemblies, of supercilious look, darting his threatening eye on the bystander, and with assumed severity and ferocious voice assailing such as conversed with him. From apprehension of poverty and of the treachery of others, as may be conjectured, he was too much given to lucre and to cruelty. At home and at table, with his intimate companions, he gave loose to levity and to mirth. He was a most facetious railer at anything he had himself done amiss, in order that he might thus do away with obloquy and make it matter of jest. Military men came to him out of every province on this side of the mountains, whom he rewarded most profusely. In consequence, when he had no longer aught to bestow, poor and exhausted, he turned his thoughts to rapines.

"The rapacity of his disposition was seconded by Ralph, the inciter of his covetousness, a clergyman of the lowest origin, but raised to eminence by his wit and subtilty. If at any time a royal edict issued that England should pay a certain tribute, it was doubled by this plunderer of the rich—this exterminator of the poor—this confiscator of other men's inheritance. He was an invincible pleader, as unrestrained in his words as in his actions, and equally furious against the meek or the turbulent. At this person's suggestion, the sacred honours of the church, as the pastors died out, were exposed to sale. These things appeared the more disgraceful because in his father's time, after the decease of a bishop or abbot, all rents were reserved entire, to be given up to the succeeding pastor; and persons truly meritorious on account of their religion were elected. But in the lapse of a very few years everything was changed. Men of the meanest condition, or guilty of whatever crime, were listened to, if they could suggest anything likely to be advantageous to the king; the halter was loosened from the robber's neck, if he could promise any emolument to the sovereign. All military discipline being relaxed, the courtiers preyed upon the property of the country people and consumed their substance, taking the very meat from the mouths of these wretched creatures.

"Then was there flowing hair and extravagant dress; and then was invented the fashion of shoes with curved points; then the model for young men was to rival women in the delicacy of person—to mince their gait, to walk with loose gesture, and half naked. Enervated and effeminate, they unwillingly remained what nature had made them—the assailers of others' chastity,

prodigal of their own. Troops of pathics and droves of harlots followed the court; so that it was said with justice, by a wise man, 'that England would be fortunate if Henry could reign'; led to such an opinion because he abhorred obscenity from his youth."[e]

HENRY BECOMES KING

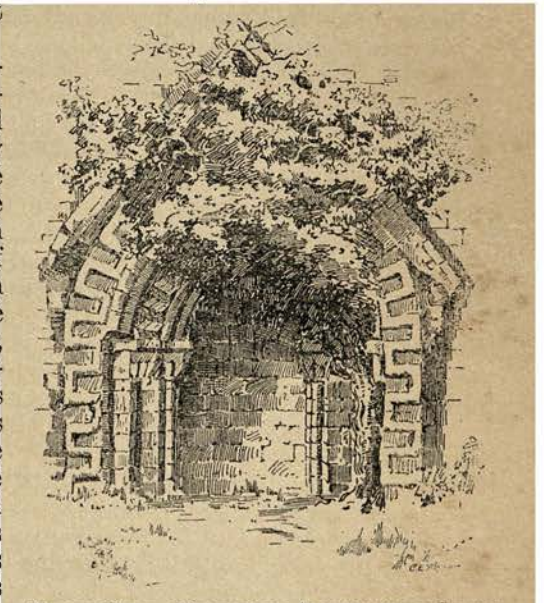
Four years were now elapsed since Robert of Normandy had abandoned his dominions in Europe to earn a barren wreath of glory in the fields of Palestine. Accompanied by Hugh of Vermandois and Robert of Flanders, he had passed the Alps, received the benediction of the pontiff at Lucca, and joined the crusaders under the walls of Constantinople. At the siege of Nice he held an important command; in the battle of Dorylæum his exhortations and example sustained the fainting courage of the Christians; at the reduction of Antioch the praise of superior prowess was shared between him and Godfrey de Bouillon; and if, during a reverse of fortune, he slunk with several others from the pressure of famine and the prospect of slavery, this temporary stain was effaced by his return to the army, his exploits in the field, and his services in the assault of Jerusalem. The crown of that city was given to Godfrey, the most worthy of the confederate chieftains; but, if we may believe the English historians, it had been previously offered to Robert, who, with more wisdom than he usually displayed, preferred his European dominions to the precarious possession of a throne surrounded by hostile and infidel nations.

By priority of birth, and the stipulation of treaties, the crown of England belonged to Robert. He had already arrived in Italy on his way home; but, ignorant of the prize that was at stake, he loitered in Apulia to woo Sibylla, the fair sister of William of Conversana. Henry, the younger brother, was on the spot: he had followed Rufus into the forest; and the moment that he heard the king was fallen, spurring his horse, he rode to Winchester to secure the royal treasures. William de Breteuil, to whose custody they had been intrusted, arrived at the same time, and avowed his determination to preserve them for Robert, the rightful heir. The prince immediately drew his sword, and blood would have been shed had not their common friends interposed, and prevailed on Breteuil to withdraw his opposition. As soon as Henry had obtained possession of the treasures and castle, he was proclaimed king; and, riding to Westminster, was crowned on the Sunday, August 5, the third day after the death of his brother. The ceremonial was the same which had been observed in the coronation of the Anglo-Saxon kings, and was performed by Maurice, bishop of London, in the absence of Anselm and the vacancy of the archiepiscopal see of York.

On the same day care was taken to inform the nation of the benefits which it would derive from the accession of the new monarch. To strengthen the weakness of his claim by connecting it with the interests of the people, he published a charter of liberties, copies of which were sent to the several counties and deposited in the principal monasteries. In this instrument he restored to the church its ancient immunities, and promised neither to sell the vacant benefices, nor to let them out to farm, nor to retain them in his own possession for the benefit of his exchequer, nor to raise tallages on their tenants. He granted to all his barons and immediate vassals (and required that they should make the same concession to their tenants) that they might dispose by will of their personal property; that they might give their daughters and female relatives in marriage without fee or impediment, provided the intended husband were not his enemy; that for breaches of the peace and other delin-

[1100 A.D.]

quencies they should not be placed at the king's mercy, as in the days of his father and brother, but should be condemned in the sums assigned by the Anglo-Saxon laws; that their heirs should pay the customary reliefs for the livery of their lands, and not the arbitrary compensations which had been exacted by his late brother; that heiresses should not be compelled by the king to marry without the consent of the barons; that widows should retain their dowers, and not be given in marriage against their will; and that the wardship of minors should, together with the custody of their lands, be committed to their mothers, or nearest relations.



NORTH DOOR, KIRKSTALL ABBEY, NEAR LEEDS
(Founded in the twelfth century)

To the nation at large he promised to put in force the laws of Edward the Confessor, as they had been amended and published by his father; to levy no moneyage which had not been paid in the Saxon times; and to punish with severity the coiners and vendors of light moneys. He exempted from all taxes and burthens the demesne lands of all his military tenants, forgave all fines due to the exchequer, and the pecuniary mulcts for "murder" committed before his coronation; and ordered, under the heaviest penalties, reparation to be made for all injustices perpetrated in consequence of the death of his brother. Such are the provisions of this celebrated charter; which is the more deserving of the reader's notice because, by professing to abolish the illegal customs introduced after the Conquest, it shows the nature of the grievances which the nation had suffered under the two Williams. Henry, however, retained both the royal forests and the forest laws; but as a kind of apology he declared that in this reservation he was guided by the advice and had obtained the consent of his barons. He added at the same time a very beneficial charter in favour of the citizens of London.

Hitherto the moral conduct of Henry had been as questionable as that of his late brother: policy now taught him to assume the zeal and severity of a reformer. He dismissed his mistresses; drove from his court the men who had scandalised the public by their effeminacy and debaucheries; and sent to hasten the return of Archbishop Anselm with expressions of the highest regard and veneration for his character. At the solicitation of the prelates he consented to marry; and the object of his choice was Matilda or Maud, the daughter of Malcolm, king of Scots, by Margaret, the sister of Eadgar Ætheling—a princess whose descent from the Anglo-Saxon monarchs was expected to add stability to his throne, and to secure the succession to his posterity.[1] An

[1 Macaulay,[1] in emphasising the social gap that separated the Norman and English elements of the population for a century or more after the Conquest, speaks of the marriage of Henry and Matilda in these words: "By many of his barons this marriage was regarded as a marriage between a white planter and a quadroon girl would be regarded in Virginia."]

objection was, however, made to their union, which nearly defeated his hopes. The princess in her childhood had been intrusted to the care of her aunt Christina, abbess of Wilton, who, to preserve the chastity of her niece from the brutality of the Norman soldiers, had compelled her to wear the veil and to frequent the society of the nuns. Hence it was contended that, according to the ecclesiastical canons, she was no longer at liberty to marry; but in a synod of the prelates the objection was overruled in conformity with a former decision of Archbishop Lanfranc on a similar occasion. The marriage was celebrated, and the queen crowned with the usual solemnity by Anselm, who had returned to England and resumed the administration of his diocese.

THE INVASION OF ROBERT

To satisfy the clamour of the people, Henry had committed to the Tower Flambard, bishop of Durham, the obnoxious minister of the late king. The prelate lived sumptuously in his confinement on the allowance which he received from the exchequer, and the presents which were sent to him by his friends; and by his wit, cheerfulness, and generosity, won the good-will, while he lulled the vigilance, of his keepers. In the beginning of February he received a rope concealed in the bottom of a pitcher of wine. The knights who guarded him were, as usual, invited to dine: they drank copiously till it was late in the evening; and soon after they had lain down to rest, Flambard, with the aid of his rope, descended from the window, was conducted by his friends to the sea-shore, and thence escaped into Normandy. In Normandy he found Duke Robert, who had married Sibylla, and returned to his duchy within a month after the death of his brother. By his former subjects he had been received with welcome; but his claim to the English crown, though he meant to enforce it, was postponed to a subsequent period. Pleasure, not power, was his present object: he wished to exhibit to his Normans the fair prize which he had brought from Apulia; and her fortune, a very considerable sum, was consumed in feastings and pageantry.[1]

But the arrival and suggestions of Flambard awakened his ambition, and turned his thoughts from pleasure to war. His vassals professed their eagerness to fight under a prince who had gained laurels in the Holy Land; tenders of assistance were received from England; and a powerful force of men-at-arms, archers, and footmen, was ordered to assemble in the neighbourhood of Tréport. On the English barons who had engaged to espouse his cause, Robert de Bellême, William de Warenne, Ivo de Grand-Mesnil, and Walter Giffard, he bestowed some of the strongest fortresses in Normandy. His object was to secure their co-operation; but he had reason to regret a measure which weakened his power and ultimately caused his ruin.

Henry beheld with disquietude the preparations of his brother; but trembled still more at the well-known disaffection of his barons. At Whitsuntide he held his court; every petition was granted; the charter was renewed; and in the hands of Anselm, as the representative of the nation, the king swore faithfully to fulfil all his engagements. His army was collected at Pevensey, on the coast of Sussex: Robert, conducted by the mariners, whom Flambard had debauched from their allegiance, reached the harbour of Portsmouth. To secure the city of Winchester became to each prince an object of the first

[1] Sibylla died in 1102 of poison, administered, it was believed, by Agnes, dowager countess of Buckingham, who, as she possessed the affections, was also ambitious to share the honours of the duke.

[1101 A.D.]

importance. Though Robert was nearer, he was delayed by the debarkation of his troops, and Henry overtook him on his march.[1]

The spirit of revolt was again awakened among the Anglo-Norman barons; but the natives remained faithful to Henry, and Anselm devoted himself to his interests. He harangued the troops on the duty of allegiance, recalled from the camp of Robert some of the deserters, confirmed the wavering loyalty of others, and threatened the invaders with the sentence of excommunication. After several fruitless and irritating messages, Henry demanded a conference with his brother. The two princes met in a vacant space between the armies, conversed for a few minutes, and embraced as friends. The terms of reconciliation were immediately adjusted. Robert renounced all claim to the crown of England, and obtained in return a yearly pension of three thousand marks, the cession of all the castles which Henry possessed in Normandy, with the exception of Damfront, and the revocation of the judgment of forfeiture, which William had pronounced against his adherents. It was moreover stipulated that both princes should unite to punish their respective enemies, and that if either died without legitimate issue, the survivor should be his heir. Twelve barons on each side swore to enforce the observance of these articles.

It was not, however, in the disposition of Henry to forget or forgive. Prevented by the treaty from chastising the public disaffection of his Anglo-Norman barons, he sought pretexts of revenge in their private conduct. Spies were appointed to watch them on their demesnes, and in their intercourse with their vassals: charges of real or pretended transgressions were repeatedly brought against them in the king's court,[2] and each obnoxious nobleman in his turn was, justly or unjustly, pronounced a criminal and an outlaw. Of the great families, the descendants of the warriors who had fought with the Conqueror, the most powerful successively disappeared; and in opposition to the others, Henry's jealousy selected from the needy followers of the court, men whom he enriched with the spoils of the proscribed, and raised to an equality with the proudest of their rivals. To these he looked as to the strongest bulwarks of his throne; for since they owed their fortunes to his bounty, their own interest, if not their gratitude, would bind them firmly to his support.

ROBERT DE BELLÊME

Among the outlaws were Robert Malet, Ivo de Grand-Mesnil, Warenne, earl of Surrey, William, earl of Mortain and Cornwall, and Robert de Bellême, earl of Shrewsbury. The last, the son of the great Montgomery, deserves some notice. He was the most powerful subject in England, haughty, rapacious, and deceitful. In these vices he might have many equals: in cruelty he rose pre-eminent among the savages of the age. He preferred the death to the ransom of his captives; it was his delight to feast his eyes with the contortions of the victims, men and women, whom he had ordered to be impaled: he is even said to have torn out the eyes of his godson with his own hands, because the father of the boy had committed some trivial offence,

[1 Ramsay *f* says that Queen Matilda was at Winchester expecting her confinement, and that, scorning to attack a lady, and his own goddaughter, under such circumstances, Robert turned aside from Winchester and directed his march towards London. At any rate, he soon found himself face to face with Henry.]

[2] This was the great merit of the Conqueror and his sons. They compelled the barons to decide their controversies in the king's court, instead of waging war against each other.

and had escaped from his vengeance. Against this monster, not from motives of humanity but of policy, Henry had conceived the most violent hatred. He was cited before the king's court: the conduct of his officers in Normandy as well as in England, his words no less than his actions, were severely scrutinised; and a long list of five-and-forty offences was objected to him by his accusers. The earl, according to custom, obtained permission to retire, that he might consult his friends: but instantly mounted his horse, fled to his earldom, summoned his retainers, and boldly bade defiance to the power of his prosecutor.

Henry cheerfully accepted the challenge, and began the war with the investment of the castle of Arundel, which, after a siege of three months, surrendered by capitulation. Bellême, in the interval, had fortified Bridgenorth, on the left bank of the Severn, and placed in it a garrison of seven hundred men; but the townsmen, intimidated by the menaces of the king, rose upon their defenders, and opened the gates to the royal forces. Shrewsbury still remained in his possession. From that city to Bridgenorth the country was covered with wood, and the only road ran through a narrow defile between two mountains, the declivities of which he had lined with his archers. Henry ordered the infantry, sixty thousand men, to open a passage: in a few days the trees were felled, and a safe and spacious road conducted the king to the walls of Shrewsbury. At his arrival despair induced Bellême to come forth on foot: he offered the keys of the place to the conqueror, and surrendered himself at discretion. His life was spared, but he was compelled to quit the kingdom, and to promise upon oath never to return without the royal permission.[b]

The country now reaped the fruits of Henry's determined policy of suppression of the great barons. Over all England went up the joyful cry, "Rejoice, King Henry, and return thanks to the Lord God, for you became a free king on the day when you reduced Robert de Bellême to subjection and drove him out of your kingdom." After the earl's banishment, Ordericus[g] tells us "the realm of Albion enjoyed peace and tranquillity, and during the thirty-three years of Henry's subsequent reign no one afterwards dared to revolt in England, nor hold any fortress against him." But Englishmen were not allowed to forget how to fight, and the continental wars of the king furnished a sufficient training in the use of arms to the rising generation.[a]

THE BATTLE OF TINCHEBRAY

Hitherto Duke Robert had religiously observed the conditions of peace. He had, even on the first notice of Bellême's rebellion, ravaged the Norman estates of that nobleman. Sensible, however, that the real crime of the outlaws was their former attachment to his interest, he unexpectedly came to England at the solicitation of the earl of Surrey, and incautiously trusted himself to the generosity of an unfeeling brother. He was received indeed with a smile of affection, but soon found that he was in reality a captive: instead of interceding in favour of others, he was reduced to treat for his own liberty; and as the price of his ransom, gladly resigned his annuity of three thousand marks, which, to save the honour of the two princes, was received as a present by the queen Matilda. After such treatment Robert could not doubt of the hostility of his brother; and in his own defence he sought the friendship and accepted the services of the outlaw Bellême, who still possessed thirty-four castles in Normandy. Henry received the intelli-

gence with pleasure, pronounced the alliance between himself and Robert at an end, accepted, perhaps procured, invitations from the enemies of the duke, and resolved to transfer the Norman coronet to his own head. He had even the effrontery to assume credit for the purity of his motives, and to hold himself out as the saviour of an afflicted country. It may, indeed, be that the duke was weak and improvident, and that he suffered his barons to wage war on each other, and to inflict every species of calamity on his subjects.

Still it will be difficult to believe that it was a hope to relieve the distresses of his countrymen, and not a desire to annex Normandy to his dominions, which induced Henry to unsheathe the sword against his unfortunate brother. The first campaign passed without any important result: in the second the fate of Normandy was decided before the walls of Tinchebray (September 28, 1106). The king had besieged that fortress, and Robert approached with all his forces to its relief.[b]

Henry was strong in his infantry, both English and Norman. There was some negotiation before the decisive battle, which took place on the 28th of September, the anniversary of William the Conqueror's landing at Hastings. When the ranks met, "the troops were thronged so closely, and their weapons so locked together, that it was out of their power to injure each other, and both parties in turn attempted in vain to break the impenetrable phalanx."[g]

The details of the battle are rather meagre, beyond this curious circumstance related by Ordericus. One of Henry's chaplains, Baudri (or Waldric), took the duke prisoner, after he had gallantly fought with unequal numbers. The contest was over.[1] Amongst other prisoners was Eadgar Ætheling, who passed the remainder of his eventful life in England, without molestation, an object of pity rather than of fear. The deposed Duke Robert was kept a prisoner in Cardiff castle. Eleven years later, Pope Calixtus met King Henry at Gisors; and when exhorted by the pontiff to release his brother, said, "I have not caused him to be bound in fetters like a captive enemy, but treating him like a noble pilgrim worn by long sufferings, I have placed him in a royal castle, and supplied his tables and wardrobe with all kinds of luxuries." We may believe in the luxuries or not; but there are entries in the accounts called the Pipe Rolls, which show that in 1111 the count of Normandy, as he is termed, was supplied with new clothes.

The story of his eyes being put out by the organs of sight being seared over a red-hot basin rests upon no contemporary authority. William of Malmesbury, who wrote whilst Duke Robert was alive, says "he endured no evil but solitude, if that can be called solitude where, by the attention of his keepers, he was provided with abundance both of amusement and of food. He was confined, however, till he had survived all his companions in the crusade, and whether he ever will be set free is doubtful." In another manuscript of Malmesbury's chronicle we find this reading: "nor was he liberated till the day of his death." That release from a captivity of twenty-eight years arrived in 1135.[k]

In the course of a few weeks Bellême, through the interest of Hélie de la Flêche, obtained permission to retain a portion of his estates; and Flambard purchased, with the surrender of Lisieux, the restoration of his bishopric. Henry summoned the Norman barons to that city, where he was acknowledged duke without opposition.

[1 "The point at issue from the beginning," says Stubbs,[h] in remarking on the importance of the victory of Tinchebray, "had not been the English crown, but the power of enforcing obedience on those Norman barons without whose submission neither country could be at peace."]

HENRY AND ANSELM

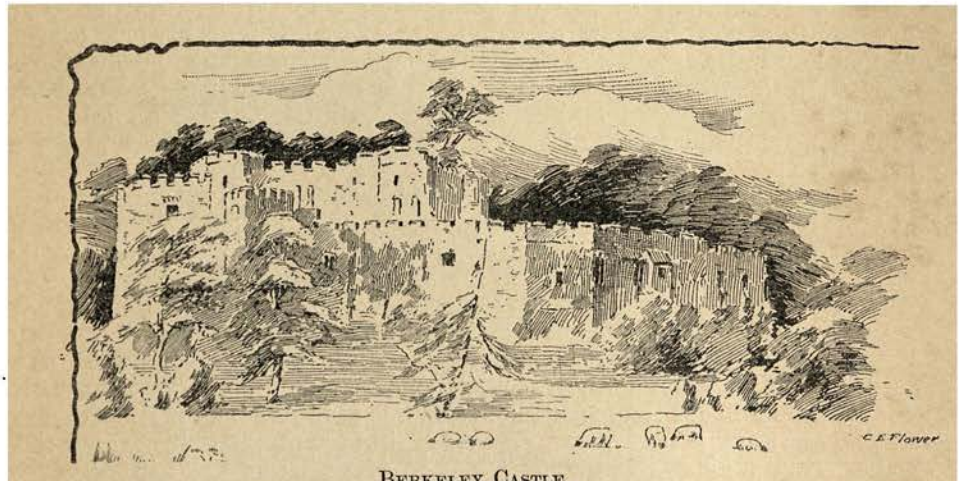
While the king had thus been employed in chastising his enemies, and stripping an unfortunate brother of his dominions, he was engaged in a less successful quarrel with Anselm and the court of Rome concerning the right of investiture. According to ancient practice, the election of bishops had generally depended on the testimony of the clergy and people and the suffrage of the provincial prelates. But the lapse of years, and the conversion of the barbarous nations, had introduced important innovations into this church of ecclesiastical polity. The tenure of clerical was assimilated to that of lay property; the sovereign assumed the right of approving of the prelate elect; and the new bishop or abbot, like the baron or knight, was compelled to swear fealty and to do homage to his superior lord. The pretensions of the crown were gradually extended. As it was the interest of the prince that the spiritual fiefs should not fall into the hands of his enemies, he reserved to himself the right of nomination; and in virtue of that right *invested* the individual whom he had nominated, with the ring and crosier, the acknowledged emblems of episcopal and abbatial jurisdiction.

The church had observed with jealousy these successive encroachments on her privileges: in the general councils of Nicæa in 787, and of Constantinople in 869, the nomination of bishops by lay authority had been condemned: in 1067 the former prohibitions were renewed by Gregory VII, and ten years afterwards Victor III in a synod at Beneventum added the sentence of excommunication both against the prince who should presume to exercise the right of investiture, and the prelate who should condescend to receive his temporalities on such conditions. But it was in vain that the thunders of the church were directed against a practice enforced by sovereigns, who refused to surrender a privilege enjoyed by their predecessors, and defended by prelates who were indebted to it for their wealth and importance. The contest between the two powers continued during half a century; nor was it without mutual concessions that claims so contradictory could be amicably adjusted.

It should, however, be remembered that the right for which the sovereigns contended had at this period degenerated into a most pernicious abuse. William Rufus, for his own profit, refused on many occasions to fill the vacant benefices, and on others degraded the dignities of the church by prostituting them to the highest bidder. In France and Germany similar evils existed even to a greater extent. In Normandy the indigence of Robert had suggested an improvement on the usual practice, by selling the reversion of bishoprics in favour of children, and granting for a proportionate sum more than one diocese to the same prelate. Every good man was anxious to suppress these abuses; and the zeal of the pontiffs was stimulated by the more virtuous of the episcopal order. Amongst these we must number Anselm. During his exile he had assisted at the councils of Bari and Rome, in which the custom of investiture had been again condemned, and the sentence of excommunication against the guilty had been renewed. At his first interview with Henry, he intimated in respectful terms his inflexible resolution to observe the discipline approved in these synods; and the king avowed an equally fixed determination to retain, what he conceived to be, the lawful prerogative of his crown.

He stood, however, at that moment, on very slippery ground. Without the aid of the primate he knew not how to put down the partisans, or to

resist the forces of his brother Robert; it was more prudent to dissemble than to throw the clergy into the arms of his competitor; and by mutual consent the controversy was suspended, till an answer could be procured from the pope; which answer, as both had foreseen, was unfavourable to the pretensions of the monarch. It would exhaust the patience of the reader to descend into the particulars of this dispute; to notice all the messages that were sent to Rome, and the answers returned to England; the artifices that were employed to deceive, and the expedients suggested to mollify Anselm. At last, by the king's request, he undertook, aged and infirm as he was, a journey to Italy, to lay the whole controversy before the pontiff; on his return he received an order to remain in banishment till he should be willing to submit to the royal pleasure. The exile retired to his friend the archbishop of Lyons, under whose hospitable roof he spent the three following years. In the interval Henry was harassed by the entreaties of his barons and the murmurs



BERKELEY CASTLE

of the people: his sister Adela, countess of Blois, and his queen, Matilda, importuned him to be reconciled to the primate; and Paschal II, who had already excommunicated his advisers, admonished him that in a few weeks the same sentence would be pronounced against himself.

The king, who was not prepared to push the dispute to this extremity, discovered a willingness to relent. Anselm met him at the abbey of Bec (1108); and both, in the true spirit of conciliation, consented to abandon a part of their pretensions. As fealty and homage were civil duties, it was agreed that they should be exacted from every clergyman before he received his temporalities: as the ring and crosier were considered to denote spiritual jurisdiction, to which the king acknowledged that he had no claim, the collation of these emblems was suppressed. On the whole the church gained little by the compromise. It might check but did not abolish the principal abuse. If Henry surrendered an unnecessary ceremony, he still retained the substance. The right which he assumed of nominating bishops and abbots was left unimpaired, and though he promised not to appropriate to himself the revenues of the vacant benefices, he never hesitated to violate his engagement.[b]

Gardiner[m] points out that this settlement would favour the king or the clergy according to the particular character of the individuals who at the

moment were placed in opposition. If some riotous ruler comparable to the Red King were opposed to a self-denying Anselm, the clergy would grow strong. But if, on the other hand, the king had the wisdom of a Henry, while the interests of the clergy were managed by a Ralph Flambard, the opposite results would naturally obtain.[a]

AFFAIRS IN NORMANDY

At the time of the battle of Tinchebray Duke Robert had a son five years old, who had been brought up at Falaise. When Henry took possession of the place the little boy was led to him. This possible heir of two kingdoms bore the name of his grandfather; and the William of five years old shrank with terror from his conquering uncle. Henry used no violence to the child, but committed him to an honest guardianship. The king appears, in another year, to have repented of his honesty, and to have desired to get the young prince into his power. But Hélie de Saint-Saens fled with his charge, and put him under the protection of Louis, king of France, and Fulk, count of Anjou. As the boy grew, the interests connected with him became more complicated. He was at first patronised, and afterwards cast off by the count of Anjou. The king of France used him as an instrument to check the growing power of Henry.

At length there was open war between France and Normandy, and in 1119 was fought the battle of Noyon, or Brenneville (Brémule), a place on the road from Rouen to Paris. Louis was here defeated, and fled. The battle was not a sanguinary one, and was remarkable for the comparative safety with which the horsemen in complete harness encountered each other. Ordericus[g] says: "In the battle between the two kings, in which nearly nine hundred knights were engaged, I have ascertained that three only were slain. This arose from their being entirely covered with steel armour, and mutually sparing each other for the fear of God, and out of regard for the fraternity of arms." The knights might spare each other, but the people were little spared. The chronicler adds, "The whole country was a desert in consequence of the wars which raged so furiously." Huntingdon,[i] under the same date, records that "this year the English were grievously burdened with continual taxes and various exactions occasioned by the king's wants."

In 1118 the "good queen Maud" died. Henry was probably not inconsolable; for she had long retired to the monastery of Westminster, where she spent her revenues in the relief of the sick and in acts of penitential piety. Her daughter Matilda had been betrothed to the emperor of Germany in 1108, and was married in 1114; and the king, on the feudal principle, taxed every hide in England three shillings upon that occasion. The story of the son's death has presently to be related.

In 1119, William the Ætheling—the Saxon title being still applied to the heir to the crown—was married to the daughter of Fulk, count of Anjou. The young prince remained in Normandy, and peace having been restored between Henry and the king of France, did homage to that king, Louis the Fat, for the fief of Normandy. At this season there was a general amity, and the most horrible violations of the rights of humanity appear to have left no enduring remorse, and to have presented no impediment to such friendships as the strong may form with the weak. The king of England had many illegitimate daughters, and one was married to Eustace de Breteuil. There had been deadly enmity between the king and his son-in-law, in which his daughter partook with a passion which demands excuse and pity.

In 1118 Eustace and the king had a dispute about the castle of Ivry; but Henry was desirous to retain the allegiance of Eustace, and it was agreed that hostages should be exchanged. Ralph Harenc, the commander of the fortress, gave his son to Eustace, and Eustace gave his two little daughters to the custody of Henry. The quarrel was not made up, and the count of Breteuil, with a savageness which is even wonderful in that age of ferocity, put out the eyes of the innocent boy. Ralph Harenc, in a transport of rage, presented himself to the king and demanded vengeance. Henry, without hesitation, gave up his two granddaughters. Was that stern heart torn with agony at the danger of these helpless little ones? Or did the honour of chivalry extinguish all natural emotion? The children were sacrificed to the revenge of Ralph Harenc. But the mother's injuries were too deep for a common indignation. She had undertaken the defence of Breteuil in the absence of her husband. The king pressed the siege. Juliana appeared on the walls, and demanded a conference with her father; and when he appeared she launched a bolt at him from a cross-bow. Henry, who was unhurt, broke down the drawbridge, so that escape was difficult. But Juliana dropped from the wall into the fosse, on a freezing night in February. In 1119, when Henry was everywhere victorious, Eustace and his wife knelt before the king in his tent, and there was reconciliation and forgiveness.[k]

THE WHITE SHIP

An end was put to the war through the praiseworthy mediation of the pope,[1] who, however, laboured in vain to procure a mitigation of the severity exercised on Duke Robert, and a proper settlement for his son William. By this treaty of peace Henry was to preserve undisturbed possession of Normandy; and his pride was saved by Louis consenting to receive the homage due to him for the duchy from the son instead of the father. This son, Prince William, who was in his eighteenth year, had received the oaths of the Norman nobles, as also the hand of his bride, a child only twelve years old, whose father, Fulk of Anjou, had given her a considerable dower.

King Henry now resolved to return triumphantly to England. The place of embarkation was Barfleur. The double retinue of the king and prince-royal was most numerous; and some delay was caused by the providing of accommodation and means of transport for so many noble personages, among whom were counted we scarcely know how many illegitimate children and mistresses of the king. On the 25th of November (1120), however, all was ready, and the sails were joyously bent, as for a short and pleasant voyage. Thomas Fitz-Stephen, a mariner of some repute, presented himself to the king, and tendering a golden mark, said: "Stephen, my father, served yours all his life by sea, and he it was who steered the ship in which your father sailed for the conquest of England. Sire king, I beg you to grant me the same office in fief: I have a vessel called the *Blanche-Nef*, well equipped and manned with fifty skilful mariners." The king replied that he had already chosen a vessel for himself, but that, in order to accede to the prayer of Fitz-Stephen, he would confide to his care the prince, with his companions and attendants. Henry then embarked, and setting sail in the afternoon with a favourable wind, reached the English coast in safety on the following morning.

The prince was accompanied in the *Blanche-Nef*, or "White Ship," by his half-brother Richard; his half-sister the Lady Marie, countess of Perche;

[1] Calixtus II. He was related by marriage to King Henry.

Richard, earl of Chester, and his wife, the king's niece; with a host of gay young nobles, both of Normandy and of England, all these and their retinues amounting, with the crew, to about three hundred persons. On such occasions it was usual to regale the mariners with a little wine, but the prince, and the young men with him, imprudently ordered three whole casks of wine to be distributed among the men, who "drank out their wits and reason." The captain had a sailor's pride in the speed of his craft and the qualities of his crew, and, though hours passed away, he promised to overtake every ship that had sailed before him. The prince certainly did not press his departure, for he spent some hours on deck in feasting and dancing with his company. A few prudent persons quitted the disorderly vessel and went on shore. Night had set in before the *Blanche-Nef* started from her moorings, but it was a bright moonlight, and the wind, though it had freshened somewhat, was still fair and gentle. Fitz-Stephen, proud of his charge, held the helm; every sail was set, and, still to increase the speed, the fifty sturdy mariners, encouraged by their boyish passengers, plied the oars with all their vigour. As they proceeded coastwise they got engaged among some rocks at a spot called Ras de Catte (now Ras de Gatteville), and the White Ship struck on one of these with such violence on her larboard side that several planks were started, and she instantly began to fill.

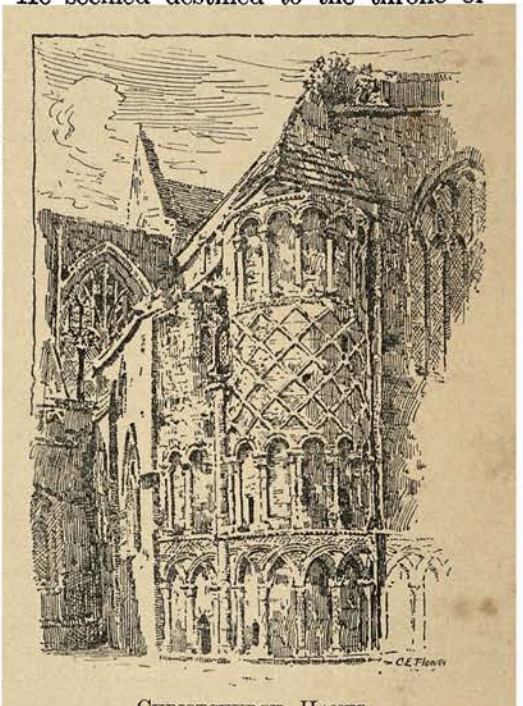
A cry of alarm and horror was raised at once by three hundred voices, and was heard on board some of the king's ships that had gained the high sea, but nobody there suspected the cause. Fitz-Stephen lowered a boat, and putting the prince with some of his companions in it, advised them to row for the shore and save themselves. This would not have been difficult, for the sea was smooth, and the coast at no great distance; but his sister, Marie, had been left behind in the ship, and her shrieks touched the heart of the prince—the best or most generous deed of whose life seems to have been his last. He ordered the boat to be put back to take her in; but such numbers leaped into it at the same time as the lady that it was upset or swamped, and all in it perished. The ship also went down with all on board. Only two men escaped by rising and clinging to the main-yard, which floated; one of these was a butcher of Rouen, named Berold, the other a young man of higher condition, the son of Gilbert de l'Aigle. Fitz-Stephen, the unfortunate captain, seeing the heads of two men clinging to the yard, swam to them. "And the king's son," said he, "what has happened to him?" "He is gone! neither he, nor his brother, nor his sister, nor any person of his company has appeared above water." "Woe to me!" cried Fitz-Stephen; and then plunged to the bottom. The night was cold, and the young nobleman became exhausted; and after holding on for some hours let go the yard, and sank to the bottom of the sea.

The butcher of Rouen, the poorest of all those who had embarked in the White Ship, wrapped in his sheepskin coat, held on till morning, when he was seen from the shore and saved by some fishermen; and from him, the sole survivor, the circumstances of the fearful event were learned. The tidings reached England in the course of the following day, but no one would venture on communicating them to the king. For three days the courtiers concealed the fact, and at last they sent in a little boy, who, weeping bitterly with "no counterfeit passion," fell at his feet, and told him that the White Ship was lost, and that all on board had perished. The hard heart of Henry was not proof to this shock—he sank to the ground in a swoon; and though he survived it many years, he was never afterwards seen to smile. By the people at large the death of the young prince was regarded with satisfaction; for indepen-

dently of his hateful vices, by which he had utterly forfeited their sympathy, he had been often heard to threaten that he would yoke the English natives to the plough, and treat them like beasts of burden, when he became king.[d]

HENRY'S PLANS FOR THE SUCCESSION; HIS CHARACTER

In 1121, King Henry married Adelaide, the daughter of the count of Louvain and duke of Lower Lorraine. They had no issue. The unhappy death of Prince William excited renewed attention to the claims of his cousin, William Clito, the son of Robert. He seemed destined to the throne of England. Fulk of Anjou affianced the Norman prince to his daughter. But Henry set in motion all his instruments of policy and succeeded in preventing the marriage. His enemies in Normandy took up the cause of the son of Robert, and the king of France bestowed on him the hand of his sister-in-law. Finally he succeeded to the countship of Flanders. He was now in a position of great power and prosperity, and stood in the way of the far-seeing designs of the king of England. Henry's only legitimate child, Matilda, was destined by him to inherit his greatness. Matilda, the empress of Germany, had become a widow in 1124; and at the Christmas of 1126, a solemn assembly at Windsor, of nobles, and bishops, and the great tenants of the crown, it was declared that the ex-empress was the next heir, failing any future legitimate male issue to the king. They then all swore to maintain her succession; and amongst the nobles who took the oath was Stephen, count of Boulogne, the son of Adela, the daughter of the Conqueror, and Robert, earl of Gloucester, the illegitimate son of Henry. David, king of Scotland, who was present as an English earl, also swore to maintain the succession of his niece Matilda. That Christmas Day of 1126 was to be fruitful of years of calamity for England.[k]



CHRISTCHURCH, HANTS
(Twelfth century)

Thus, by an act without precedent either in his kingdom or his duchy, Henry procured that homage should be done to his daughter as his successor. No more striking comment can be needed as to the growth of the new ideas of kingship. The crown was coming to be so thoroughly looked on as a possession that it was deemed that it might pass to a woman. On the other hand no settlement could be more opposed to modern ideas of hereditary right. When homage was first done to Matilda, Robert's son, William, who according to modern notions was the direct heir of the Conqueror, was still living. But in the lack of legitimate male heirs, the choice either of the king's natural son

Robert or of his sister's son Stephen would have been much less opposed to earlier ideas, both English and Norman, than the succession of Matilda.[n]

Fulk, the count of Anjou, had surrendered his European states to his eldest son Geoffrey Plantagenet, for he had accepted the higher dignity of king of Jerusalem. An alliance with the Plantagenets was one of the great objects of Henry's ambition, and he negotiated a marriage of Matilda with the young earl. Their nuptials were solemnised at Rouen at the Whitsuntide of 1127. This marriage of policy was not a happy one. The king had constantly to interfere between the husband and wife. Matilda had much of her father's imperious spirit; and Geoffrey made demands which Henry resisted. There was deep enmity between them. But in 1133 Matilda bore a son, Henry. The oaths to maintain the succession were renewed. Before this period, however, the king had been freed from much disquiet, by the death of his nephew, William, the count of Flanders, who was wounded under the walls of Alost in 1128, in a revolt headed by the count of Alsace, and fomented, no doubt, by the intrigues of the English king.[k]

In 1135 Henry died. His character has been diversely estimated both by his contemporaries and by modern historians. But he was a strong ruler beyond any doubt, and in comparison with the stormy years of anarchy and misrule that followed, his reign was indeed a period of peace and happiness for England; in comparison with the wilful lawlessness of William Rufus and the weakness and incapability of Stephen he well deserves the appellation of the "lion of justice." "He was a good man," says the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*,[i] "and great was the awe of him; no man durst ill-treat another in his time; he made peace for man and deer." "From the eighth year of his reign," writes Ordericus,[g] "in which he acquired firm hold on power on both sides of the sea, he always sought peace for the nations under him, and rigidly punished with austere measures the transgressors of the law." The great constitutional historian, Bishop Stubbs, strikes a happy balance in his judicious estimate. "He was," writes Stubbs,[h] "it is evident, a strong ruler, with a clear view of his own interests, methodical, sagacious, and far-sighted: his selfish aims dictated the policy that gave peace and order to his people; destroying his enemies, he destroyed theirs, and by enforcing order he paved the way for law. Such a king neither expects nor deserves love; but he is regarded with a mixed feeling of confidence and awe, and the result of his rule is better than that of many who are called benefactors." [a]

STEPHEN OF BLOIS (1135 A.D.)

Scarcely was Henry I dead, when events proved how fruitless were all his pains and precautions to secure the succession to his daughter. There were several capital obstacles to bar the avenues of the throne to Matilda. The first was her sex. Since the time of the ancient Britons, England had never obeyed a female sovereign. In the same manner, the Normans had never known a female reign. To hold their fiefs "under the distaff" (as it was called) was considered humiliating to a nobility whose business was war, and whose king was little else than the first of many warriors.

Accordingly a loud and general cry was raised by the Anglo-Norman and Norman barons that it would be most disgraceful for so many noble knights to obey the orders of a woman. These all but insurmountable objections would not hold good against her son Henry; but that prince was an infant not yet four years old, and regencies under a long minority were as incompatible

[1135 A.D.]
with the spirit and condition of the times as a female reign. It was something, however, to have confined the right of succession to the legitimately born; for if the case had occurred a little earlier in England, the natural son of the king, Robert, earl of Gloucester, might possibly have been elected without scruple.

No one was better acquainted with the spirit of the times and the obstacles raised against Matilda and Earl Robert than the ambitious Stephen, nephew of the late king. Henry had been unusually bountiful to this nephew. He married him to Maud, daughter and heir of Eustace, count of Boulogne, who brought him, in addition to the feudal sovereignty of Boulogne, immense estates in England. By this marriage Stephen also acquired another close connection with the royal family of England, and a new hold upon the sympathies of the English, as his wife Maud was of the old Saxon stock, being the only child of Mary of Scotland, sister to David, the reigning king, as also to the good queen Maud, the first wife of Henry, and mother of the empress Matilda. Still further to aggrandise this favourite nephew, Henry conferred upon him the great estate forfeited by Robert Mallet in England, and that forfeited by the earl of Mortain in Normandy. He also brought over Stephen's younger brother Henry, who, being a churchman, was created abbot of Glastonbury and bishop of Winchester.

Stephen had resided much in England, and had rendered himself exceedingly popular both to the Normans and the people of Saxon race. The barons and knights admired him for his undoubted bravery and activity—the people for his generosity, the beauty of his person, and his affable, familiar manners. He was the popular favourite in the already important and fast-rising city of London before Henry's death. When that event happened he was nearer England than Matilda, whose rights he had long determined to dispute. Taking advantage of his situation, he crossed the Channel immediately, and though the gates of Dover and Canterbury were shut against him, he was received in London with enthusiastic joy, the populace saluting him as king without waiting for the formalities of the election and consecration. The first step to the English throne in those days, as we have seen in the cases of Rufus and Henry, was to get possession of the royal treasury at Winchester. Stephen's own brother was bishop of Winchester, and by his assistance he got the keys into his hands. The treasure consisted of £100,000 in money, besides plate and jewels of great value. His episcopal brother was otherwise of the greatest use, being mainly instrumental in winning over Roger, bishop of Salisbury, then chief justiciar and regent of the kingdom, and William Corbeil, archbishop of Canterbury. Bishop Roger was easily gained through his constant craving after money; but the primate was not assailable on that side. It was therefore thought necessary to practise a deception upon him, and Hugh Bigod, steward of the late household, made oath before him that the king on his death-bed had adopted and chosen his nephew, Stephen, to be his heir and successor, because his daughter the empress had grievously offended him by her recent conduct. After hearing Bigod's oath, the archbishop seems to have floated quietly with the current, without offering either resistance or remonstrance. Some scruples may have remained, but no opposition was offered to his election, and on the 26th of December, being St. Stephen's Day, Stephen was hallowed and crowned at Westminster by the primate, William Corbeil.

Immediately after his coronation he went to Reading, to attend the burial of the body of his uncle, King Henry, and from Reading abbey he proceeded to Oxford, where he summoned a great council of the prelates, abbots, and lay-barons of the kingdom, that he might receive their oaths of allegiance,

and consult with them on the affairs of the state. When the assembly met, he allowed the clergy to annex a condition, which, as they were sure to assume the right of interpretation, rendered their oaths less binding even than usual. They swore to obey him as their king, so long as he should preserve their church liberties and the vigour of discipline, and no longer. The confirmation of the pope soon followed. The letter of Innocent II, which ratified Stephen's title, was brief and clear. Stephen seems to have laid stress on his election as king, "with the consent of the clergy and people," and on the confirmation granted him by the pope. He promised to redress all grievances, and grant to the people all the good laws and good customs of Edward the Confessor.

STEPHEN, KING OF ENGLAND
(1105-1154)

Whatever were his natural inclinations, the circumstances in which he was placed, and the villainous instruments with which he had to work, from the beginning to the end of his troubled reign, put it wholly out of his power to keep the promises he had made, and the condition of the English people became infinitely worse under him than it had been under Henry, or even under Rufus. A concession which he made to the lay barons contributed largely to the frightful anarchy which ensued. To secure their affections and to strengthen himself, as he thought, against the empress, he granted them all permission to fortify their castles and build new ones; and these, almost without an exception, became dens of thieves and cutthroats. At first, probably on account of the large sum of money he had in hand to meet demands, all went on in great peace and harmony; and the court which the new king held in London during the festival of Easter, in the first year of his reign, was more splendid, and better attended in every respect, than any that had yet been seen in England.

Nor were the prelates and barons in Normandy more averse to the succession of Stephen than their brethren in England. There was an hereditary animosity between Normandy and Anjou, so that when Geoffrey Plantagenet, count of Anjou, marched into the duchy to assert the rights of his wife Matilda, he and his Angevins met with a determined opposition, and he was, soon after, glad to conclude a peace or truce for two years with Stephen, on condition of receiving during that time an annual pension of five thousand marks. When Stephen appeared on the Continent the Normans swore allegiance, and Louis VII formed an alliance by contracting his young sister Constance with Eustace, Stephen's son, and, as suzerain, granted the investiture of Normandy to Eustace, who was then a mere child.

During the first year of Stephen's reign England was disturbed only by the revolt of the earl of Exeter, who was discontented with his share in the new king's liberalities; and by a Scottish incursion made into the northern counties in support of Matilda by her uncle King David, who, however, was bought off for the present by the grant of the lordship of Huntingdon and the castle of Carlisle.

ROBERT OF GLOUCESTER

Robert, earl of Gloucester, the late king's natural son, merged his own pretensions to the crown in those of his half-sister Matilda. Pretending to be reconciled to his rule, he came over from the Continent (1137) and took the oaths of fealty and homage to Stephen, by the performance of which ceremony he obtained possession of his vast estates in England. The first use he made of the advantages the oaths procured him was to intrigue with the nobles in favour of his half-sister. The happy calm in which England lay did not last long after the earl of Gloucester's arrival. Several of the barons, alleging their services had not met with due reward, began to seize different parts of the royal demesne, which they said Stephen had promised them. Hugh Bigod, who had sworn that King Henry had appointed Stephen his successor, and who probably put a high price on his perjury, was foremost among the disaffected, and seized Norwich Castle. Other royal castles were besieged and taken, or were treacherously surrendered. They were nearly all soon retaken by the king, but the spirit of revolt was rife among the nobles, and the sedition, suppressed in one spot, burst forth in others. Stephen, however, was lenient and merciful beyond all precedent to the vanquished.

The earl of Gloucester, having settled with his friends the plan of a most extensive insurrection, and induced the Scottish king to promise another invasion of England, withdrew beyond sea, and sent a letter of defiance to Stephen, in which he formally renounced his homage. Other great barons—all pleading that Stephen had not given them enough, nor extended their privileges as he had promised—fell from his side, and withdrew to their castles, which by his permission they had already strongly fortified. He was abandoned, like Shakespeare's Macbeth, but his soul was as high as that usurper's. "The traitors!" he cried, "they themselves made me a king, and now they fall from me; but by God's birth, they shall never call me a deposed king!"

THE BATTLE OF THE STANDARD (1138 A.D.)

While he was engaged with the revolted barons in the south, King David of Scotland, true to his promise, gathered his forces together from every part of his dominions—from the Lowlands, the Highlands, and the Isles—from the great promontory of Galloway, the Cheviot Hills, and from that nursing-place of hardy, lawless men, the Border-land between the two kingdoms—and crossing the Tweed (March, 1138), advanced boldly into Northumberland, riding with Prince Henry, his son and heir, at the head of as numerous, as mixed, and, in the main, as wild a host as ever trod this ground. These "Scottish ants," as Matthew of Paris[r] calls them, overran the whole of the country between the Tweed and the Tees. "As for the king of Scots himself," says the anonymous author of *Gesta Stephani*,[s] "he was a prince of a mild and merciful disposition; but the Scots were a barbarous and impure nation, and their king, leading hordes of them from the remotest parts of that land, was unable to restrain their wickedness." The Normans conciliated the English people of the north by a strong appeal to the local superstitions—they invoked the names of the saints of Saxon race whom they had been wont to treat with little respect; and the popular banners of St. Cuthbert of Durham (or, according to some, of St. Peter of York), St. John of Beverley, and St. Wilfrid of

Ripon, which had long lain dust-covered in the churches, were produced in the army, as the pledges and means of victory.

So rapid was the advance of King David that Stephen had not time to reach the scene of hostilities; and the defence of the north was, in a great measure, left to Thurstan or Toustain, archbishop of York, an infirm, decrepit old man, but whose warlike energies, address, and cunning were not affected by age and disease. It was mainly he who organised the army of defence, which was got together in a hurry, and though sickness prevented him from putting on his own coat of mail, he sent Ralph, the bishop of Durham, to represent him on the field of battle. As the Scots were already upon the Tees, the Anglo-Norman army drew up between that river and the Humber, choosing their own battle-field at Northallerton, about equidistant from York and Durham. Here they erected a remarkable standard, from which the battle has taken its name. A car upon four wheels was drawn to the centre of the position; the mast of a vessel was strongly fastened in the car; at the top of the mast a large crucifix was displayed, having in its centre a silver box containing the consecrated wafer; and, lower down, the mast was decorated with the banners of the three English saints. Around this sacred standard many of the English yeomanry and peasants from Yorkshire, Nottingham, and Lincolnshire, gathered of their own accord. These men were all armed with large bows and arrows two cubits long; they had the fame of being excellent archers, and the Normans gladly assigned them posts in the foremost and most exposed ranks of the army.

The Scots crossed the Tees in several divisions. Prince Henry commanded the first corps, which consisted of men from the Lowlands armed with cuirasses and long pikes; of archers from Teviotdale and Liddesdale; of troopers from the mountains of Cumberland and Westmoreland, mounted on small but strong and active horses; and of the fierce men of Galloway, who wore no defensive armour, and carried long thin pikes as their chief weapon of war. A body-guard of knights and men-at-arms under the command of Eustace Fitz-John, a nobleman of Norman descent, rode round the prince. The Highland clans and men of the isles came next, carrying a small round shield made of light wood covered with leather as their only defensive armour, and the claymore or broad-sword as their only weapon: some of the island tribes, however, wielded the old Danish battle-axe instead of the claymore. After these marched the king with a strong body of knights, who were all either of English or Norman extraction; and a mixed corps of men from various other parts of the land brought up the rear.

The rapid advance of the Scottish forces was covered by a dense fog; and they would have taken the Anglo-Norman army by surprise, had it not been for Robert de Bruce and Bernard de Baliol, two barons of Norman descent, who held lands both in Scotland and England, and who were anxious for the conclusion of an immediate peace. Having in vain argued with David, and hearing themselves called traitors by William, the king's nephew, they renounced the Scottish allegiance, bade defiance to the king, and putting spurs to their horses, galloped off to the camp at Northallerton, which they reached in good time to tell that the Scots were coming. At the sight and sound of the headlong and tumultuous approach of the Scots the bishop of Durham read the prayer of absolution from the standard-car, the Normans and the English kneeling on the ground the while, and rising to their feet and shouting "Amen" when it was finished.

The Scots came on with the simple war-cry of "Alban! Alban!" The desperate charge of the men of Galloway drove in the English infantry, and

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broke for a moment the Norman centre. "They burst the enemy's ranks," says old Brompton,[t] "as if they had been but spiders' webs." Almost immediately after, both flanks of the Anglo-Normans were assailed by the mountaineers and the men of Teviotdale and Liddesdale; but these charges were not supported in time, and the Norman horse formed an impenetrable mass round the standard-car, and repulsed the Scots. During this fruitless effort of the enemy the English bowmen rallied, and took up good positions on the two wings of the Anglo-Norman army; and when the Scots renewed their attack on the centre, they harassed them with a double flank flight of arrows, while the Norman knights and men-at-arms received them in front on the points of their couched lances. The long thin pikes of the men of Galloway were shivered against the armour of the Normans, or broken by their heavy swords and battle-axes. The Highland clans, still shouting "Alban! Alban!" wielded their claymores, and fighting hand to hand, tried to cut their way through the mass of iron-cased chivalry. For full two hours did the Scots maintain the fight in front of the Norman host, and at one moment the gallant Prince Henry had nearly penetrated to the elevated standard; but at last, with broken spears and swords, they ceased to attack—paused, retreated, and then fled in confusion. The king, however, retained near his person, and in good order, his guards and some other troops, which covered the retreat, and gave several bloody checks to the Anglo-Normans who pursued.

Three days after, he rallied within the walls of Carlisle, and employed himself in collecting his scattered troops and organising a new army. He is said to have lost twelve thousand men at Northallerton. The Normans were not in a situation to pursue their advantages to any extent; and the Scots soon reassumed the offensive. The famous battle of the Standard[1] was fought on the 22d of August, 1138. The Scottish war was concluded in the following year by a treaty of peace, brought about by Alberic, bishop of Ostia, the pope's legate in England, and Stephen's wife, Maud, who had an interview with her uncle, King David, at Durham. Though the Scots were left in possession of Cumberland and Westmoreland, and Prince Henry invested with the earldom of Northumberland, the issue of the war dispirited the malcontents all over England, and might have given some stability to Stephen's throne, had he not, in an evil moment, roused the powerful hostility of the church.

ROGER OF SALISBURY

Roger, bishop of Salisbury, though no longer treasurer and justiciar, still possessed great influence in the nation, among laity as well as clergy—an influence not wholly arising out of his great wealth and political abilities, but in part owing to the use he made of his money, to his taste and munificence, and the superior learning of his family and adherents. "It was wonderful to behold," says Malmesbury,[e] "what abundant authority attended, and flowed, as it were, to his hand. He was sensible of his power, and somewhat more harshly than beseemed such a character, abused the favour of heaven. Was there anything adjacent to his possessions which he desired, he would obtain it either by treaty or purchase; and if that failed, by force." He

[1 "The battle of the Standard," says Freeman,[o] "is one of the most striking events in the history of the age. It is one of two or three great actions in the open field in a time when we hear much more of sieges and skirmishes than of pitched battles. And it is an action in which, as at Tinchebray, though the chiefs are Norman, the tactics are English. When the time for fighting comes the horsemen get down from their steeds and fight on foot."]

was in all things a most magnificent person, and one who extended his patronage to men of learning as well as to architects and other artists. He obtained the sees of Lincoln and Ely for his two nephews, Alexander and Nigel. Alexander, the bishop of Lincoln, who, though called his nephew, is significantly said to have been something nearer and dearer, had the same taste for raising splendid buildings; but Nigel, on the contrary, is said to have wasted his wealth on hawks and hounds. Bishop Roger, next to Stephen's own brother, the bishop of Winchester, had contributed more than any churchman to his elevation, and Stephen's consequent liberality for a long time knew no stint. It appeared, however, that his gifts were not the free offerings of gratitude, and that he treated the bishop as one does a sponge which is permitted to fill before it is squeezed. Roger was one of the castle-builders of that turbulent period: all his stately mansions were, in fact, strongly fortified places, well garrisoned, and provided with warlike stores.

YPRES CASTLE, RYE
(Erected as a watch-tower in the twelfth century)

The pomp and power of this family had long excited the envy of Stephen's favourites, who had no great difficulty in persuading their master that Bishop Roger was on the point of betraying him, and espousing the interests of Matilda. Stephen's want of money now drove him into irregular courses, and he probably considered that the bishop's time was ripe.. The king was holding his court at Oxford: the town was crowded with prelates and barons, with their numerous and disorderly attendants; a quarrel, either accidental or preconcerted, arose between the bishop's retainers and those of the count of Brittany, concerning quarters, and swords being drawn on both sides, many men were wounded and one knight was killed. Stephen took advantage of the circumstance and ordered the arrest of the bishop and his nephews. Roger was seized in the king's own hall, and Alexander, the bishop of Lincoln, at his lodging in the town; but Nigel, the bishop of Ely, who had taken up his quarters in a house outside the town, escaped, and threw himself into Devizes, the strongest of all his uncle's castles. The two captives were confined in separate dungeons. The first charge laid against them was a flagrant violation of the king's peace within the precincts of his court; and for this they were assured that Stephen would accept of no atonement less than the unconditional surrender to him of all their castles. They at first refused, but at length surrendered the castles at Malmesbury, Sherborne, and Salisbury.

But the castle of Devizes, the most important of them all, remained; and the warlike bishop of Ely was prepared to bid defiance to the king. To

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overcome this opposition, Stephen ordered Roger and the bishop of Lincoln to be kept without food till the castle should be given up. In case of a less direct appeal, the defenders of Devizes might have been obstinate or incredulous of the fact that Stephen was starving two bishops; but Roger himself, already pale and emaciated, was made to state his own hard fate, in front of his own castle, to his own nephew, whom he implored to surrender. Stephen, though far less cruel by nature than most of his contemporaries, was yet thought to be a man to keep his word in such a case as the present; this was felt by the bishop of Ely, who, overcoming his own haughty spirit, out of affection to his uncle, surrendered to save the lives of the captives after they had been three whole days in a fearful fast.

At these violent proceedings the whole body of the dignified clergy, including even his own brother Henry, the bishop of Winchester, who was now armed with the high powers of papal legate for all England, turned against Stephen, accusing him of sacrilege in laying violent hands on prelates. The legate Henry summoned his brother, the king, to appear before a synod of bishops assembled at Winchester. Stephen would not attend in person, but sent Alberic de Vere as his counsel to plead for him. As their temper was stern and uncompromising, De Vere appealed to the pope in the name of the king and dissolved the council, the knights with him drawing their swords to enforce his orders if necessary. The effects of this confirmed rupture were soon made visible. But Bishop Roger did not live to see the humiliation of Stephen; he was heart-broken; and when, in the following month of December, as the horrors of a civil war were commencing, he died at an advanced age, his fate was ascribed, not to the fever and ague, from which, in Malmesbury's words, he escaped by the kindness of death, but to grief and indignation for the injuries he had suffered. The plate and money which had been saved from the king's rapacity he devoted to the completion of his church at Salisbury, and he laid them upon the high altar, in the hope that Stephen might be restrained, by fear of sacrilege, from seizing them. But these were not times for delicate scruples, and they were carried off even before the old man's death. Their value was estimated at forty thousand marks. Bishop Roger was the Cardinal Wolsey of the twelfth century, and his fate, not less tragic than the cardinal's, made a deep impression on the minds of his contemporaries.

THE LANDING OF MATILDA (1139 A.D.)

The synod of bishops held at Winchester was dissolved on the first day of September (1139), and towards the end of the same month Matilda landed in England with her half-brother, Robert, earl of Gloucester, and 140 knights. Stephen, by a rapid movement, presently surprised her in Arundel castle, where Adelaide, the queen-widow of Henry I, gave her shelter. Stephen had both in his power, but refining on the chivalrous notions to which he was inclined by nature more perhaps than suited good policy, he left Queen Adelaide undisturbed in her castle, and gave Matilda permission to go free and join her half-brother, Robert, who had repaired to the west country, where at the very moment he was collecting his friends to make war upon Stephen. The king's brother, the bishop of Winchester, escorted Matilda to Bristol, and delivered her safely to Earl Robert. Most of the chiefs in the north and the west renounced their allegiance to Stephen, and took fresh oaths to the empress. There was a moment of wavering, during which many of the barons in other parts of the kingdom weighed the chances of success, or tried both

parties, to ascertain which would grant the more ample recompense to their venal swords.

While this state of indecision lasted, men knew not who were to be their friends, or who their foes, in the coming struggle; "the neighbour," wrote Gervase of Canterbury,[u] "could put no faith in his nearest neighbour, nor the friend in his friend, nor the brother in his own brother;" but at last the more active chiefs chose their sides, the game was made up, and the horrors of civil war, which were to decide it, were let loose upon the land. Still, however, many of the barons kept aloof, and, strongly garrisoning their own castles, took the favourable opportunity of despoiling, torturing, and murdering their weak neighbours. The whole war was conducted in a frightful manner; but the greatest of the atrocities seem to have been committed by these separationists, who cared neither for Stephen nor Matilda, and who rarely, or never, took the field for either party. They waged war against one another, and besieged castles, and sacked farms, and seized the unprotected traveller, on their own account, and for their own private spite or advantage.

At first the fortune of the greater war inclined in favour of Stephen; for though he failed to take Bristol, the headquarters of Matilda and Earl Robert, he gained many advantages over their adherents in the west, and he defeated a formidable insurrection in the east, headed by Nigel, the bishop of Ely. Nigel fled to Gloucester, whither Matilda had transferred her standard; and while Stephen was still on the eastern coast, the flames of war were rekindled in all the west.

THE BATTLE OF LINCOLN (1141 A.D.)

The cause of Stephen was never injured by any want of personal courage and rapidity of movement. From the east he returned to the west, and from the west marched again to the country of fens. The castle of Lincoln was in the hands of his enemies; but the townspeople were for Stephen, and assisted him in laying siege to the fortress. On the 2d of February, 1141, as Stephen was prosecuting this siege, the earl of Gloucester, who had got together an army ten thousand strong, swam across the Trent, and appeared in front of Lincoln. Stephen, however, was prepared to receive him: he had drawn out his forces in the best position, and, dismounting from his war-horse, he put himself at the head of his infantry. But his army was unequal in number, and contained many traitors; the whole of his cavalry deserted to the enemy, or fled at the first onset; and after he had fought most gallantly, and broken both his sword and battle-axe, Stephen was taken prisoner by the earl of Gloucester. Matilda was incapable of imitating his generosity; but her partisans lauded her mercy because she only loaded him with chains, and threw him into a dungeon in Bristol castle. The empress does not appear to have encountered much difficulty in persuading the bishop of Winchester wholly to abandon his unfortunate brother, and acknowledge her title. The price paid to the bishop was the promise that he should have the chief direction of her affairs, and the disposal of all vacant bishoprics and abbacies. The bargain was concluded on the 2d of March at Winchester. The next day the brother of Stephen conducted the empress to the cathedral of Winchester, within which he blessed all who should be obedient to her, and denounced all who refused to submit to her authority. As legate of the pope, this man's decision had the force of law with most of the clergy; and several bishops, and even Theobald, the new archbishop of Canterbury, fol-

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lowed his example. At Winchester, Matilda took possession of the royal castle, the crown, with other regalia, and on the 7th of April convened an assembly of churchmen to ratify her accession. The legate prevailed with them all. William of Malmesbury,[e] who was present, and heard the opening speech, professes to give the very words of the legate. The brother of Stephen began by contrasting the turbulent times they had just witnessed with the tranquillity and happiness enjoyed under the wise reign of Henry I; he said that he blushed to bear testimony against his own brother, but that Stephen had violated all his engagements, particularly those made to the church; that hence God had pronounced judgment against him, and placed them again under the necessity of appointing someone to fill the throne. "And now," said the legate in conclusion, "in order that the kingdom may not be without a ruler, we, the clergy of England, to whom it chiefly belongs to elect kings and ordain them, do elect Matilda, the daughter of the pacific, rich, glorious, good, and incomparable King Henry, to be sovereign lady of England and Normandy." The assembly hailed the conclusion of the speech with loud and repeated acclamations. The deliberations of the synod, and the proclamation of Matilda, were hurried over before the deputation from the city of London could reach Winchester. When the decision of the council was announced to them, these deputies said they did not come to debate, but to petition for the liberty of their king; that they had no powers to agree to the election of this new sovereign; and that the whole community of London, with all the barons lately admitted into it, earnestly desired the immediate liberation of Stephen. But Stephen's brother was not much moved; he repeated to the Londoners the arguments he had used the day before; the deputies departed with a promise, in which there was probably little sincerity, to recommend his view to their fellow citizens; and the legate broke up the council with a sentence of excommunication on several persons who still adhered to his brother, not forgetting a certain William Martel, who had recently made free on the roads with a part of his (the legate's) baggage.

MATILDA IN LONDON; THE SIEGE OF WINCHESTER

If popular opinion can be counted for anything in those days—and if the city of London, together with Lincoln and other large towns, may be taken as indexes of the popular will—we might be led to conclude that Stephen was still the sovereign of the people's choice, or, at least, that they preferred him to his competitor. The feelings of the citizens of London were indeed so decided, that it was not until some time had passed, and the earl of Gloucester had soothed them with promises and flattering prospects, that Matilda ventured among them. She entered the city a few days before midsummer, and made preparations for her immediate coronation at Westminster. But Matilda herself, who pretended to an indefeasible, sacred, hereditary right, would perform none of the promises made by her half-brother; on the contrary, she imposed a heavy tallage or tax on the Londoners, as a punishment for their attachment to the usurper; and arrogantly rejected a petition they presented to her, praying that the laws of Edward the Confessor might be restored, and the changes and usages introduced by the Normans abolished. Indeed, whatever slight restraint she had formerly put on her haughty, vindictive temper, was now entirely removed; and in a surprisingly short space of time she contrived not only to irritate her old opponents to the very utmost, but also to convert many of her best friends into bitter enemies. When

the legate desired that Prince Eustace, his nephew, and Stephen's eldest son, should be put in possession of the earldom of Boulogne and the other patrimonial rights of his father, she gave him a direct and insulting refusal. When Stephen's wife, who was her own cousin, and a kind-hearted, amiable woman, appeared before her, seconded by many of the nobility, to petition for the enlargement of her husband, she showed the malignancy and littleness of her soul by personal and most unwomanly upbraidings.

The acts of this tragedy, in which there was no small mixture of farce, passed rapidly; and before the coronation clothes could be got ready, and the bishops assembled, Matilda was driven from London without having time to take with her so much as a change of raiment. One fine summer's day, "nigh on to the feast of St. John the Baptist," and about noontide, the dinner hour of the court in those times, a body of horse bearing the banner of Queen Maud (the wife of Stephen) appeared on the southern side of the river opposite the city; on a sudden all the church-bells of London sounded the alarm, and the people ran to arms. From every house there went forth one man at least with whatever weapon he could lay his hand upon. They gathered in the streets, says a contemporary, like bees rushing from their hives. Matilda saved herself from being made prisoner by rushing from table, mounting a horse and galloping off. She had scarcely cleared the western suburb when some of the populace burst into her apartment, and pillaged or destroyed whatever they found in it. Such was her leave-taking of London, which she never saw again. Some few of her friends accompanied her to Oxford.

Matilda had not been long at Oxford when she conceived suspicions touching the fidelity of the bishop of Winchester, whom she had offended beyond redress, and who had taken his measures accordingly, absenting himself from court, and manning the castles which he had built within his diocese. He had also an interview with his sister-in-law, Maud, at the town of Guildford, where he probably arranged the plans in favour of his brother Stephen, which were soon carried into execution. Matilda sent him a rude order to appear before her forthwith. The cunning churchman told her messenger that he was "getting himself ready for her"; which was true enough. She then attempted to seize him at Winchester; but, having well fortified his episcopal residence and set up his brother's standard on its roof, he rode out by one gate of the town as she entered at the other, and then proceeded to place himself at the head of his armed vassals and friends. Matilda laid siege to the episcopal palace, which was in every essential a castle. The legate's garrison made a sortie, and set fire to all the neighbouring houses of the town that might have weakened their position, and then, being confident of succour, waited the event.

The bishop did not make them wait long. Being reinforced by Queen Maud and the Londoners, he turned rapidly back upon Winchester, and actually besieged the besiegers there. By the 1st of August he had invested the royal castle of Winchester, where, besides the empress-queen, there were shut up the king of Scotland, the earls of Gloucester, Hereford, and Chester, and many other of the noblest of her partisans. When the siege had lasted six weeks, all the provisions in the castle were exhausted, and a desperate attempt at flight was resolved upon. By tacit consent the belligerents of those times were accustomed to suspend their operations on the great festivals of the church. The 14th of September was a Sunday, and the festival of the Holy Rood. At a very early hour of the morning of that day Matilda mounted a swift horse, and, accompanied by a strong and well-mounted

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escort, crept as secretly and quietly as was possible out of the castle: her half-brother, the earl of Gloucester, followed at a short distance with a number of knights, who had engaged to keep between her and her pursuers. These movements were so well timed and executed, that they broke through the beleaguerers, and got upon the Devizes road, before the legate's adherents could mount and follow them. Once in the saddle, however, they made hot pursuit, and at Stourbridge, the earl of Gloucester and his gallant knights were overtaken. To give Matilda time to escape, they offered an obstinate resistance. They were nearly all made prisoners; but their self-devotion had the desired effect, for the queen reached the castle of Devizes in safety. Not finding herself in security even there, Matilda immediately resumed her journey, and, the better to avoid danger, feigned herself to be dead, and being placed on a bier, caused herself to be drawn in a hearse from Devizes to Gloucester. The king of the Scots, Matilda's uncle, got safely back to his own kingdom; but her half-brother, the earl of Gloucester, who was by far the most important prisoner that could be taken, was conveyed to Stephen's queen, who secured him in Rochester castle.

Both parties were now, as it were, without a head, for Matilda was nothing in the field in the absence of her half-brother. A negotiation was therefore set on foot, and on the 1st of November it was finally agreed that the earl of Gloucester should be exchanged for King Stephen. The interval had been filled up by unspeakable misery to the people; but, as far as the principals were concerned, the two parties now stood as they did previously to the battle of Lincoln. The legate summoned a great ecclesiastical council, which met at Westminster on the 7th of December, and he there produced a letter from the pope, ordering him to do all in his power to effect the liberation of his brother. This letter was held as a sufficient justification of all the measures he had recently adopted. Stephen addressed the assembly, briefly and moderately complaining of the wrongs and hardships he had sustained, and adding, that if it would please the nobles of the realm to aid him with men and money, he trusted so to work as to relieve them from the fear of a shameful submission to the yoke of a woman. At last the legate himself rose to speak. He pleaded that it was through force, and not out of conviction or good-will, that he had supported the cause of Matilda. He was thus, he maintained, freed from his oaths to the "countess of Anjou," for he no longer deigned to style her by a higher title. The judgment of heaven, he said, was visible in the punishment of her perfidy, and God himself now restored the rightful King Stephen to his throne. The council went with the legate, and no objection was started save by a solitary voice, which boldly asserted that the legate himself had caused all the calamities which had happened—that he had invited Matilda into England—that he had planned the expedition in which Stephen was taken—and that it was by his advice that the empress had loaded his brother with chains. The imperturbable legate heard these open accusations without any apparent emotion, and with the greatest composure proceeded to excommunicate all those who remained attached to the party he had just quitted.

No compromise between the contending parties was as yet thought of. No decisive action was fought, but a succession of skirmishes and forays, petty sieges, and the burning of defenceless towns and villages kept people on the rack in nearly every part of the land at once. Both parties had engaged foreign mercenaries; and, in the absence of regular pay and provision and of all discipline, bands of Brabançons and Flemings prowled through the land, satisfying all their appetites in the most brutal manner.

During Stephen's captivity, Matilda's husband, Geoffrey of Anjou, reduced nearly the whole of Normandy, and prevailed upon the majority of the resident nobles to acknowledge Prince Henry (his son by Matilda) as their legitimate duke. The king's party thus lost all hope of aid and assistance from beyond sea; but, as they were masters of the coasts of the island, they were able to prevent the arrival of any considerable reinforcement to their adversaries. Matilda pressed her husband to come to her assistance with all the forces he could raise; but Geoffrey declined the invitation on the ground that he had not yet made himself sure of Normandy; but he offered to send over Prince Henry. Even on this point he showed no great readiness, and several months were lost ere he would intrust his son to the care of the earl of Gloucester, whom Matilda had sent into Normandy.

THE SIEGE OF OXFORD (1141 A.D.)

Meanwhile Stephen marched to Oxford, where the empress had fixed her court, and invested that city, with a firm resolution of never moving thence until he had got his troublesome rival into his hands. Matilda retired into the castle, and the victor's troops set fire to the town. Stephen invested the citadel, and persevered in the operations of the siege or blockade in a winter of extraordinary severity; and so intent was he on his purpose that he would not permit his attention to be distracted even when informed that the earl of Gloucester and Prince Henry had landed in England. The castle was strong, but when the siege had lasted some three months, Matilda again found herself in danger of starvation, to escape which she had recourse to another of her furtive flights. On the 20th of December, a little after midnight, she dressed herself in white, and, accompanied by three knights in the same attire, stole out of the castle by a postern gate. The ground being covered with deep snow, the party passed unobserved, and the Thames, being frozen over, afforded them a safe and direct passage. Matilda pursued her course on foot as far as the town of Abingdon, where, finding horses, the party mounted, and she rode on to Wallingford, where she was joined by the earl of Gloucester and her young son, who were now at the head of a considerable force. The day after Matilda's flight Oxford castle surrendered to the king; but the king himself was defeated by the earl of Gloucester at Wilton, in the following month of July, and, with his brother the legate, narrowly escaped being made prisoner.

After the affair of Wilton no military operation deserving of notice occurred for three years, during which Stephen's party prevailed in all the east; Matilda's maintained their ground in the west; and the young prince was shut up for safety in the strong castle of Bristol, where, at his leisure moments, his uncle, the earl of Gloucester, who enjoyed, like his father, Henry Beauclerc, the reputation of being a learned person, attended to his education. The presence of the boy in England was of no use whatever to his mother's or his own cause, and in 1147 he returned to his father Geoffrey in Normandy. Gloucester died of a fever in the month of October; and thus, deprived of son and brother, and depressed also by the loss of other staunch partisans, the masculine resolution of Matilda gave way, and, after a struggle of eight years, she quitted England and retired to Normandy.

After her departure, Stephen endeavoured to get possession of all the baronial castles, and to reduce the nobles to a proper degree of subordination; but the measures he adopted were as unpalatable to his own adherents

as to the friends of Matilda. At the same time he involved himself in a fresh quarrel with the church, and that, too, at a moment when his brother, the legate, and bishop of Winchester, had lost his great authority through the death of the pope, who patronised him, and the election of another pope, who took away his legatine office, and espoused the quarrel of his now declared enemy, Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury.

For attending the council of Rheims, against the express orders of the king, the archbishop was exiled. Caring little for this sentence, Theobald (1148) put himself under the protection of Bigod, earl of Norfolk, who was of the Angevin faction, and then published a sentence of interdict against Stephen's party and all that part of the kingdom that acknowledged the rule of the "usurper." Instantly, in one half of the kingdom all the churches were closed, and the priests and monks either withdrew, or refused to perform any of the offices of religion. This was a state of things which men could not bear, and Stephen was compelled to seek a reconciliation with the archbishop. About two years after this reconciliation a general council of the high clergy was held at London; and Stephen, who, in the interval, had endeavoured to win the hearts of the bishops and abbots with donations to the church, and promises of much greater things when the kingdom should be settled, required them to recognise and anoint his eldest son, Eustace, as his successor. This the archbishop of Canterbury resolutely refused to do. He had consulted, he said, his spiritual master, and the pope had told him that Stephen was a usurper, and therefore could not, like a legitimate sovereign, transmit his crown to his posterity. It was quite natural, and perhaps excusable, that Stephen, on thus hearing his rights called in question by a man who had sworn allegiance to him, should be overcome by a momentary rage and order his guards to arrest the bishops and seize their temporalities.

HENRY PLANTAGENET

As long as the contest lay between Stephen on the one side and a woman and a boy on the other, it was likely to be, on the whole, favourable to the former. But time had worked its changes; Prince Henry was no longer a boy, but a handsome, gallant young man, capable of performing all the duties of a knight and soldier, and gifted with precocious abilities and political acumen. He had also become, by inheritance and marriage, one of the most powerful princes on the Continent. When Henry Plantagenet left Bristol castle he was about fourteen years of age. In 1149, having attained the military age of sixteen, he recrossed the seas and landed in Scotland, in order to receive the honour of knighthood at the hands of his mother's uncle, King David. The ceremony was performed with great pomp in "merry Carlisle"; crowds of nobles from most parts of England, as well as from Scotland and Normandy, were present, and had the opportunity of remarking Henry's many eminent qualities; and as that prince had only been returned to the Continent some twelve months when Stephen assembled the council for the anointing of his son, the impressions made by the fortunate Plantagenet were still fresh, and his character was naturally contrasted with that of Prince Eustace, who was about his own age, but who does not appear to have had one of his high endowments.

Shortly after his return from Carlisle, Henry was put in full possession of the government of Normandy; by the decease of his father Geoffrey (1150), he succeeded to the countship of Anjou; and in 1152, together with the hand of Eleanor, the divorced queen of Louis VII of France, he acquired her rights

over the countship of Poitou, and the vast duchy of Guienne or Aquitaine, which had descended to her from her father. The Plantagenet party in England recovered their spirits at the prospect of this sudden aggrandisement, and thinking no more of the mother, they determined to call in the son to reign in his own right. But the king of France formed an alliance with King Stephen, Theobald, count of Blois, and Geoffrey of Anjou, Henry's younger brother, and marched to the confines of Normandy. This attempt occasioned some delay; but as soon as Henry obtained a truce on the Continent, he sailed for England with a small fleet. The army he brought over with him did not exceed 140 knights and 3,000 foot, but it was well appointed and disciplined; and as soon as he landed in England most of the old friends of his family flocked to join his standard. It was unexpectedly found, however, that Stephen was still strong in the affections and devotion of a large party. The armies of the competitors came in sight of each other at Wallingford.

TINTERN ABBEY
(Founded in 1131)

They lay facing each other during two whole days, and were hourly expecting a sanguinary engagement; but the pause had given time for salutary reflection, and the earl of Arundel had the boldness to say that it was an unreasonable thing to prolong the calamities of a whole nation on account of the ambition of two princes. Many lords of both parties laboured to persuade both princes to come to an amicable arrangement. The two chiefs consented; and in a short conversation which they carried on with one another across a narrow part of the Thames, Stephen and Henry agreed to a truce, during which each expressed his readiness to negotiate a lasting peace. On this, Prince Eustace, who was probably well aware that the first article of the treaty would seal his exclusion from the throne, burst away from his father in a paroxysm of rage, and went into the east to get up a war on his own account. The rash young man took forcible possession of the abbey of Bury Saint Edmunds, and laid waste or plundered the country round about, not excepting even the lands of the abbot. His licentious career was very brief, for, as he was sitting down to a riotous banquet, he was suddenly seized with a frenzy, of which he soon died.[1]

The principal obstacle to concession from Stephen was thus removed, for though he had another legitimate son, Prince William, he was but a boy, and was docile and unambitious. The principal negotiators, who with great ability and address reconciled the conflicting interests of the two factions, were Theobald, the archbishop of Canterbury, and Henry, bishop of Winchester, Stephen's brother, who played so many parts in this long and chequered drama. On the 7th of November, 1153, a great council of the kingdom was held at Winchester, where a peace was finally adjusted on the following conditions: Stephen, who was to retain undisturbed possession of the crown during his life, adopted Henry as his son, appointed him his successor, and gave

[1] Writers of a later period introduced some confusion in this matter by accounting for his death in different ways. Some of them said Eustace was drowned.

the kingdom, after his own death, to Henry and his heirs forever. In return Henry did present homage, and swore fealty to Stephen. Henry received the homage of the king's surviving son William, and, in return, gave that young prince all the estates and honours, whether in England or on the Continent, which his father Stephen had enjoyed before he ascended the throne. There then followed a mighty interchange and duplication of oaths among the earls, barons, bishops, and abbots of both factions, all swearing present allegiance to Stephen, and future fealty to Henry.

After signing the treaty, Stephen and Henry visited together the cities of Winchester, London, and Oxford, in which places solemn processions were made, and both princes were received with acclamations by the people. At the end of Lent they parted with expressions of mutual friendship. Henry returned to the Continent, and on the following 25th of October (1154), Stephen died at Dover, in the fiftieth year of his age. He was buried by the side of his wife, Maud, who died three years before him, at the monastery of Faversham, in the pleasant county of Kent, which she had loved so much.[d]

A CONTEMPORARY VIEW OF STEPHEN'S REIGN

The disorders of Stephen's reign form the subject of the last great outburst of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.* In all that has been written since, nothing is at once so vivid and so impressive as this record of an eye-witness of the results of a king's weakness and vacillation:[a]

When the traitors perceived that the king was a mild man, and a soft, and a good, and that he did not enforce justice, they did all wonder. They had done homage to him, and sworn oaths, but no faith kept they; all became forsworn, and broke their allegiance, for every rich man built his castles, and defended them against him; and they filled the land full of castles. They greatly oppressed the wretched people by making them work at these castles, and when the castles were finished they filled them with devils and evil men.

Then they took those whom they suspected to have any goods, by night and by day, seizing both men and women, and they put them in prison for their gold and silver, and tortured them with pains unspeakable, for never were any martyrs tormented as these were. They hung some up by their feet, and smoked them with foul smoke; some by their thumbs, or by the head, and they hung burning things on their feet. They put a knotted string about their heads, and writhed it till it went into the brain. They put them into dungeons wherein were adders and snakes and toads, and thus wore them out. Some they put into a crucet-house, that is, into a chest that was short and narrow, and not deep, and they put sharp stones in it, and crushed the man therein so that they broke all his limbs. There were hateful and grim things called Sachenteges in many of the castles, and which two or three men had enough to do to carry. The Sachentege was made thus: it was fastened to a beam, having a sharp iron to go round a man's throat and neck, so that he might no ways sit, nor lie, nor sleep, but that he must bear all the iron. Many thousands they exhausted with hunger. I cannot and I may not tell of all the wounds, and all the tortures that they inflicted upon the wretched men of this land; and this state of things lasted the nineteen years that Stephen was king, and ever grew worse and worse. They were continually levying an exaction from the towns, which they called Tensery,[1] and when the miserable

[1] A payment to the superior lord for protection.

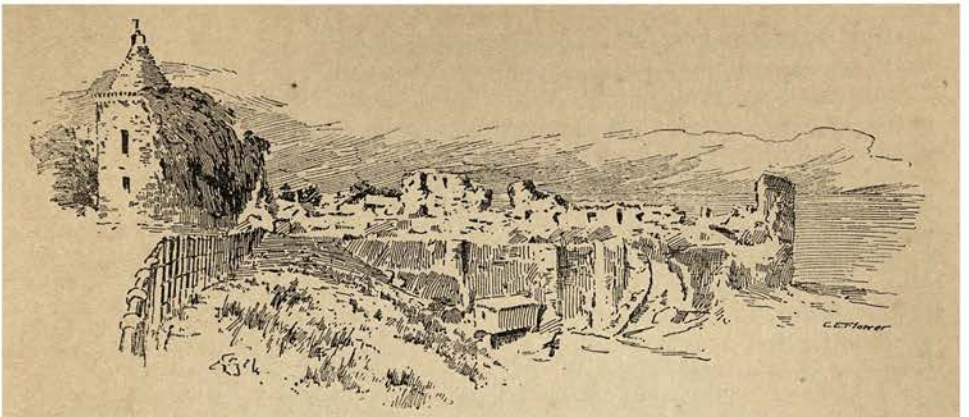
[1154 A.D.]

inhabitants had no more to give, then plundered they, and burned all the towns, so that well mightest thou walk a whole day's journey nor ever shouldest thou find a man seated in a town, or its lands tilled.

Then was corn dear, and flesh, and cheese, and butter, for there was none in the land—wretched men starved with hunger—some lived on alms who had been erewhile rich: some fled the country—never was there more misery, and never acted heathens worse than these. At length they spared neither church nor churchyard, but they took all that was valuable therein, and then burned the church and all together. Neither did they spare the lands of bishops, nor of abbots, nor of priests; but they robbed the monks and the clergy, and every man plundered his neighbour inasmuch as he might. If two or three men came riding to a town, all the township fled before them, and thought that they were robbers. The bishops and clergy were ever cursing them, but this to them was nothing, for they were all accursed, and forsworn, and reprobate. The earth bare no corn; you might as well have tilled the sea, for the land was all ruined by such deeds, and it was said openly that Christ and his saints slept. These things, and more than we can say, did we suffer during nineteen years because of our sins.[i]

FUSION OF NORMANS AND ENGLISH

It was during the reigns of the two sons and the grandson of the Conqueror that the chief steps were taken towards the fusion of English and Normans into one people, or rather towards the change of Normans into Englishmen. At the accession of Rufus the distinction was in full force; at the accession of Henry I it is clearly visible. In the course of Henry's reign it so far died out that, though it was doubtless not forgotten, it was no longer marked by outward distinction. The name of Englishmen now takes in all natives of England, of whatever descent. A tale of a general conspiracy to kill all the Normans soon after the accession of Stephen proves, when it is examined, to mean, just as in the case of the massacre of St. Brice, not a design to slay every man of Norman descent in England, but merely a design to slay a particular body of Norman mercenary soldiers. Everything during these reigns tended to draw the two races more nearly together; nothing tended to keep them apart. The brutal tyranny of Rufus wronged both races alike; yet men of native English descent could rise even under him. The cold despotism of Henry at once benefited and offended both races alike. At one time of his reign we meet with a complaint that he would admit no Englishmen to high office. When the complaint is tested, it is found that the exclusion extended to natives of England of both races, that the preference was a preference for absolute foreigners as such. The horrors of the anarchy in Stephen's day fell on both races alike; the foreign mercenaries who laid waste the land were hateful to both alike. We may safely say that, at the time of the accession of Henry of Anjou, the man of Norman descent born in England had, altogether in feeling and largely in speech, become an Englishman.[n]



ST. ANDREW'S CASTLE

CHAPTER VII

THE REIGN OF HENRY II

[1154–1189 A.D.]

HENRY may well have contemplated with an anxiety little short of despair the task which lay before him. It was nothing less than the resuscitation of the body politic from a state of utter decay. The legal, constitutional and administrative machinery of the state was at a deadlock; the national resources, material and moral, were exhausted. To bring under subjection, once for all, the remnant of the disturbing forces which had caused the catastrophe, and render them powerless for future harm; to disinter from the mass of ruin the fragments of the old foundations of social and political organisation, and build up on them a secure and lasting fabric of administration and law; to bring order out of chaos, life out of decay—this was the work which a youth who had not yet completed his twenty-second year now found himself called to undertake, and to undertake almost single-handed.—NORGATE.[b]

HENRY'S ACCESSION: QUEEN ELEANOR

WHEN Henry Plantagenet received the news of Stephen's death he was engaged in the siege of a castle on the frontier of Normandy. Relying on the situation of affairs in England, and the disposition of men's minds in his favour, he prosecuted the siege to a successful close, and reduced some turbulent continental vassals to obedience, before he went to the coast to embark for his new kingdom. He was detained some time at Barfleur by storms and contrary winds; and it was not till six weeks after the death of Stephen that he landed in England, where he was received with enthusiastic joy. He brought with him a splendid retinue, and Eleanor, his wife, whose inheritance had made him so powerful on the Continent. This marriage proved that, if the young Henry had the gallantry of his age and all the knightly accomplishments then in vogue, he was not less distinguished by a cool, calculating head, and the faculty of sacrificing romantic or delicate feelings for political

advantages. The lady he espoused was many years older than himself, and the repudiated wife of another.

Eleanor was daughter and heiress of William IX,[1] earl of Poitou and duke of Aquitaine—the sovereign of all the western coast of France, from the mouth of the Loire to the foot of the Pyrenees. She was married in 1137 to Louis VII, king of France, who was not less enchanted with her beauty than with the fine provinces she brought him. When the union had lasted some years, and the queen had given birth to two daughters, the princesses Marie and Alix, Louis resolved to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and to take along with him his wife, whose uncle, Raymond, was duke of Antioch. The general morality of the royal and noble crusaders and pilgrims is represented in no very favourable light by contemporary writers; and it is easily understood how camps and marches, and a close and constant association with soldiers, should not be favourable to female virtue. Suspicion soon fell upon Eleanor, who, according to her least unfavourable judges, was guilty of great coquetry and freedom of manners; and her conduct in the gay and dissolute court of Antioch at last awakened the indignation of her devout husband.

She was very generally accused of an intrigue with a young and handsome Turk, named Saladin.[2] In 1152, about a year after their return from the Holy Land, Louis summoned a council of prelates for the purpose of divorcing him from a woman who had publicly dishonoured him. The bishop of Langres, pleading for the king, gravely announced that his royal master "no longer placed faith in his wife, and could never be sure of the legitimacy of her progeny." But the archbishop of Bordeaux, desirous that the separation should be effected in a less scandalous manner, proposed to treat the whole question on very different grounds—namely, on the consanguinity of the parties, which might have been objected by the canonical law as an insuperable barrier to the marriage when it was contracted fifteen years before, but which now seemed to be remembered by the clergy somewhat tardily. This course, however, relieved them from a delicate dilemma. Eleanor voluntarily and readily agreed to the dissolution of the marriage, and the council dissolved it accordingly—on the pretext that the consciences of the parties reproached them for living as man and wife when they were cousins within the prohibited degree.[3]

But the good, simple Louis wonderfully deceived himself when he thought that no prince of the time would be so wanting in delicacy, and regardless of his own honour, as to marry a divorced wife of so defamed a reputation. According to a contemporary authority, Eleanor's only difficulty was in making a choice and escaping the too forcible addresses of some of her suitors. Henry soon presented himself, and, "with more policy than delicacy," wooed, and won, and married her, too, within six weeks of her divorce. King Louis had

[1] This Duke William was a troubadour of high renown, and the most ancient of that class of poets whose works have been preserved.

[2] Some old writers confound this Saladin with the Great Saladin, the heroic opponent of Eleanor's son, Richard; but this is a great mistake, involving an anachronism.

[3] The divorce of Eleanor has given rise to all manner of conjectures on the part of historians because of the great divergence in the accounts of contemporary writers. The French chroniclers are naturally bitter against the queen. The English and Angevin writers are more favourable. Gervase of Canterbury,[a] who treats the matter very fully, declares that Henry and Eleanor married for love, and that Eleanor had herself procured the divorce in order to marry Henry—a statement which, of course, is untrue. "As to the question of consanguinity," says Kate Norgate,[b] "that of Louis and Eleanor is not very clear; it was at any rate more remote than that of Henry and Eleanor, who certainly were within the forbidden degree." To which Ramsay[c] adds that scarcely a marriage in the ruling classes of the time could have stood the test of the prohibited "tenth degree."]

[1154 A.D.]

been more delicate than politic; and, however honourable to him individually, his delicacy was a great misfortune to France, for it dissevered states which had been united by the marriage—retarded that fusion and integration which alone could render the French kingdom respectable, and threw the finest territories of France into the hands of his most dangerous enemies. When it was too late, Louis saw the great error in policy he had committed, and made what efforts he could to prevent the marriage. He prohibited Henry, as his vassal for Normandy and Anjou, to contract any such union; but Henry, by far the more powerful of the two, cared little for the prohibition, and Louis, in the end, was obliged to content himself with receiving the empty oaths of allegiance which the fortunate Plantagenet tendered for Guienne and Poitou.

The sacrifice was indeed immense. The French kingdom almost ceased to figure as a maritime state on the Atlantic; and when Eleanor's possessions were added to those Henry already possessed on the Continent, that prince occupied the whole coast line from Dieppe to Bayonne, with the exception only of the great promontory of Brittany.

HENRY'S CORONATION AND REFORMS

At their first arrival in England everything wore a bright aspect. The queen rode by the king's side into the royal city of Winchester, where they both received the homage of the nobility; and when, on the 19th of December, Henry took his coronation oaths, and was crowned at Westminster by Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, Eleanor was crowned with him, amidst the acclamations of the people. Not a shadow of opposition was offered; the English, still enamoured of their old dynasty or traditions, dwelt with complacency on the Saxon blood, which, from his mother's side, flowed in the veins of the youthful, handsome, and brave Henry; and all classes seemed to overlook the past history of the queen in her grandeur and magnificence and present attachment to their king. The court pageantries were splendid, and accompanied by the spontaneous rejoicings of the citizens.

Henry proceeded to business almost as soon as the crown was on his head. He assembled a great council, appointed the crown officers, issued a decree, promising his subjects all the rights and liberties they had enjoyed under his grandfather, Henry I; and he made his barons and bishops swear fealty to his infant children, his wife Eleanor having already made him the happy father of two sons. He then turned his attention to the correcting of those abuses which had rendered the reign of Stephen a long agony to himself and a curse to the nation. His reforms were not completed for several years, but it will render the narrative clearer to condense our account of these transactions in one general statement.

Henry appointed the earl of Leicester grand justiciar of the kingdom, and, feeling that the office had hitherto been insufficiently supported by the crown, he attached to it more ample powers, and provided the means of enforcing its decisions. As happened in all seasons of trouble and distress in those ages, the coin had been alloyed and tampered with under Stephen; and now Henry issued an entirely new coinage of standard weight and purity. The foreign mercenaries and companies of adventure that came over to England during the long civil war between Stephen and Matilda had done incalculable mischief. Many of these adventurers had got possession of the castles and estates of the Anglo-Norman nobles who adhered to Matilda, and had been created earls

and barons by Stephen; Henry determined to drive every one of them from the land, and their expulsion seems to have afforded almost as much joy to the Saxon population as to the Normans, who raised a shout of triumph on the occasion. "We saw," says Ralph de Diceto, "these Brabançons and Flemings cross the sea, to return from the camp to the plough-tail, and become again serfs, after having been lords."

Up to this point the operations were easy, and the king was carried forward on the high tide of popular opinion; but in what still remained to do were great and obvious difficulties, for in the impartial execution of his measures he had to despoil those who fought his mother's battles and supported his own cause when he was a helpless infant. The generous romantic virtues natural to youth might have been fatal to him; but Henry's heart in some respects seems never to have been young, and his head was cool and calculating. In a treaty made at Winchester, shortly after his pacification with Stephen, it was stipulated that the king (Stephen) should resume all such royal castles and lands as had been alienated to the lay nobles or usurped by them. Among the resumable gifts were many made by Matilda. Stephen, poor as he was, had neglected this resumption, or made no progress in it during the few months that he survived the treaty. But Henry was determined not to be a pauper king, or to tolerate that widely stretched aristocratic power which bade fair to reduce royalty to an empty shadow. In the absence of other fixed revenues, the sovereigns of that time depended almost entirely on the produce of the crown lands; and Stephen had allowed so much of these to slip from him that there remained not sufficient for a decent maintenance of royal dignity. Besides the numerous castles which had been built by the turbulent nobles, royal fortresses and even royal cities had been granted away; and these could hardly be permitted to remain in the hands of the feudal lords without endangering the peace of the kingdom. Law was brought in to the aid of policy, and it was now established as a legal axiom that the ancient demesne of the crown was of so sacred and inalienable a nature that no length of time, tenure, or enjoyment could give a right of prescription to any other possessors, against the claim of succeeding princes, who might (it was laid down) at any time resume possession of what had formerly been alienated.

HENRY II

Foreseeing, however, that this step would create much discontent, Henry was cautious not to act without a high sanction; and he therefore summoned a great council of the nobles, who, after hearing the urgency of his necessities, concurred pretty generally in the justice of his immediately resuming all that had been held by his grandfather Henry I, with the exception of the alienations or grants to Stephen's son and the church. As soon as he was armed

with this sanction the young king put himself at the head of a formidable army, knowing right well that there were many who would not consider themselves bound by the voices of the assembly of nobles, and who would only cede their castles and lands by force. In some instances the castles, on being closely beleaguered, surrendered without bloodshed; in others, they were taken by storm or reduced by famine. In nearly all cases they were levelled to the ground, and about eleven hundred of these "dens of thieves" were blotted out from the fair land they defaced. After many toils, and not a few checks, Henry completed his purpose; he drove the earl of Nottingham and some other dangerous nobles out of the kingdom; he levelled with the ground the six strong castles of Stephen's brother, the famous bishop of Winchester, who, placing no confidence in the new king whom he had helped to make, fled with his treasures to Cluny; he reduced the earl of Aumale, who had long reigned like an independent sovereign in Yorkshire, to the proper state of vassalage and allegiance; and he finally obliged Malcolm, king of Scots, to resign the three northern counties of Northumberland, Cumberland, and Westmoreland [and do homage] for the possession of the earldom of Huntingdon, which the Scottish princes claimed as descendants of Earl Waltheof. Henry was not less eager to recover everything than wisely anxious to avoid the appearance of acting from motives of party revenge; and by his equal and impartial proceeding he left the adherents of Stephen no more reason to complain than his mother's or his own partisans.[c]

EARLY YEARS OF HENRY'S REIGN

Before Henry had completed his work of destroying the "adulterine" castles he was called to the Continent (1156), where his younger brother Geoffrey had raised the standard of revolt in Anjou and Maine, asserting that by his father's will these possessions were to fall to him if Henry became king of England. Louis VII, who had openly shown encouragement to Geoffrey, was detached from his support by Henry's unconditionally and voluntarily renewing his oath of allegiance to the French king for all the numerous possessions he held of him. Henry at the head of an army invaded the disputed territory, and Geoffrey was forced to submit, and to be satisfied with the liberal pension which his brother allowed him. Before his return to England Henry made a triumphal progress through Aquitaine and the other dominions which Eleanor had brought him, and at a great council held at Bordeaux received the homage of his principal vassals.

Henry had returned to England (1157) to conduct a campaign against the Welsh. With a powerful army he entered Flintshire, and penetrated far into the mountains of North Wales without opposition. At last, however, as his army was entering a narrow defile in Coleshill (Cynsyllt) Forest he was unexpectedly attacked by the Welsh under their chief, Owen Gwynedd. Taken at a disadvantage, the English loss was enormous, the king saved himself with difficulty, and many of his chief barons fell; but the army at length fought its way out of the pass. Thenceforth the campaign was conducted with greater caution, and after marching for some distance along the coast, and constructing castles at several strategic points, a peace was concluded by which the Welsh chieftains swore fealty to the English king and gave up to him several districts they had won in Stephen's time.

Henry had scarcely returned to England when Geoffrey accepted from the city of Nantes in lower Brittany a voluntary tender of the government

of their municipality. But Geoffrey died within the year, and the city renewed its former allegiance to Conan, count of Brittany. Henry, who had long looked upon Brittany with a covetous eye, as the only break in the chain of his continental possessions, put forth the astounding claim that Nantes fell to him by inheritance, on Geoffrey's death. Crossing at once to Brittany, where he was ineffectually opposed by Conan, Henry forced Nantes into submission, and then quietly occupied all the region between the Vilaine and the Loire. With Conan, whom he left in control of Brittany, he concluded an arrangement by which his young son Geoffrey was affianced to Conan's daughter, Constance, with the understanding that she should accede to her father's Breton possessions at his death. In order to pacify Louis, who was naturally alarmed at Henry's actions, the king, with his faithful friend and minister Thomas à Becket, proceeded at once to Paris with a magnificent retinue. Then, while the nobles and people were dazzled and interested by lavish display and well-placed generosity, there was concluded a treaty providing for the marriage of Henry's eldest son, Prince Henry, to Louis' daughter Margaret.

Early in 1159 Henry took a step which he must have realised was almost certain to disrupt the friendly relations he had just been at so much pains to establish with Louis. This was a determination to recover Toulouse from Raymond V, its count. With Queen Eleanor, Henry had come into possession of a disputed claim to these dominions which the counts of Poitou had long asserted. As the holder of that title he now prepared to press the claim. The expedition against Toulouse is of importance in English history, however, not so much because of its military operations as because

BYLAND ABBEY, YORKSHIRE (1150 A.D.)

the preparations for it were marked by the institution of one of the financial measures for which Henry is best remembered. This was the institution of the tax known as scutage, as a commutation for personal military service. Henry realised that in calling upon the English and Normans to help him in his wars in far-away Aquitaine he was stretching the theory of feudal service to the uttermost, and he preferred not to make the attempt. He therefore

[1159-1160 A.D.]

hit upon the idea of asking England and Normandy to furnish funds with which he could employ an army of mercenaries, who not only would be likely to be all trained fighting men, but who would also be unhindered by the forty-day limitation of feudal service. Therefore a commutation was arranged amounting to two marks on a knight's fee in England and sixty shillings in Normandy.

By this and other means Henry raised the sum of £180,000 in all his dominions, and gathered together at Poitiers a finely equipped army of mercenaries. With them came a mighty array of barons and knights from all Henry's possessions, and beside him rode Malcolm, king of Scotland, Raymond, king of Aragon, and the clerical lord chancellor, Becket, accoutred as any lay baron, and accompanied by seven hundred knights and men-at-arms raised at his own expense. The expedition undertaken in such force, although marked by several brilliant exploits, was on the whole unsuccessful. Cahors was taken, but before Toulouse was reached Louis had taken the field in behalf of Count Raymond, and thrown himself into the city; and Henry, influenced, it is said, by a realisation of his feudal obligations and the bad example he might set to his own vassals by ruthlessly breaking them, withdrew his forces without laying siege to the city. In the following year a peace negotiated by Becket was concluded with Louis. Prince Henry did homage to Louis for his father's duchy of Normandy, and Aquitanian garrisons were left in Cahors and the other towns occupied during the southern campaign. Before the year was out Prince Henry, aged seven, and Princess Margaret, aged three, were married by special dispensation of the pope.[a]

ST. ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL
(Founded by Bishop Arnold about 1160)

A short period of tranquillity, both in England and Henry's continental dominions, followed this reconciliation; and when it was disturbed, the storm proceeded from a most unexpected quarter—from Thomas à Becket, the king's bosom friend.

THE RISE OF BECKET

Becket was born in London, in or about the year 1117.[1] His father was a citizen and trader. The boy, however, was gifted with an extraordinary intelligence, a handsome person, and most engaging manners; and his father

[1 The older historians were fond of laying stress on the Saxon parentage of Thomas, as emphasising the unusual ability that one of the conquered race must have possessed to rise to such heights of power. Modern research, however, has spoiled this pretty conclusion by informing us that Gilbert Becket, the father of Thomas, was a native of Rouen who had settled in London, and that his mother Rohesia was likewise a Norman, having been born in Caen.]

gave him all the advantages of education that were within his reach. He studied successively at Merton abbey, London, Oxford, and Paris, in which last city he applied to civil law, and acquired as perfect a mastery and as pure a pronunciation of the French language as any of the best educated of the Norman nobles and officers. While yet a young man, he was employed as an under-clerk in the office of the sheriff of London, where he attracted the attention of Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, who sent him to complete his study of the civil law at the then famous school of Bologna. After profiting by the lessons of the learned Gratian, Becket recrossed the Alps, and stayed some time at Auxerre, in Burgundy, to attend the lectures of another celebrated law professor.

On his return to London he took deacon's orders,[1] and his powerful patron the archbishop gave him some valuable church preferment, which necessitated neither a residence nor the performance of any church duties; and he soon afterwards sent him, as the best qualified person he knew, to conduct some important negotiations at the court of Rome. The young diplomatist —he was then only thirty-two years old—acquitted himself with great ability and complete success, obtaining from the pope a prohibition that defeated the design of crowning Prince Eustace, the son of Stephen—an important service, which secured the favour of the empress Matilda and the house of Plantagenet. On Henry's accession, Archbishop Theobald had all the authority of prime minister, and, being old and infirm, he delegated the most of it to the active Becket, who was made chancellor of the kingdom two years after, being the first man of English birth since the Conquest that had reached any eminent office. Henry at the same time appointed him preceptor of the heir to the crown, and gave him the wardenship of the Tower of London, the castle of Berkhampstead, and the honour of Eye, with 340 knights' fees. His revenue was immense; and no man ever spent more freely or magnificently. His house was a palace, both in dimensions and appointments. It was stocked with vessels of gold and silver, and constantly frequented by numberless guests of all ranks, from barons and earls to knights and pages and simple retainers. His tables were spread with the choicest viands; the best of wines were poured out with an unsparing hand; the richest dresses allotted to his pages and serving-men.

The chancellor's out-door appearance was still more splendid, and on great public occasions was carried to an extremity of pomp and magnificence. When he went on his embassy to Paris, in 1158, he was attended by two hundred knights, besides many barons and nobles, and a host of domestics, all richly armed and attired, the chancellor himself having four-and-twenty changes of apparel. As he travelled through France, his train of wagons and sumpter-horses, his hounds and hawks, his huntsmen and falconers, seemed to announce the presence of a more than king. Whenever he entered a town, the ambassadorial procession was led by 250 boys, singing national songs; then followed his hounds, led in couples; and these were succeeded by eight wagons, each with five large horses and five drivers in new frocks. Every wagon was covered with skins, and guarded by two men and a fierce mastiff. Two of the wagons were loaded with ale, to be distributed to the people; one carried the vessels and furniture of his chapel; another of his bed-chamber; a fifth was loaded with his kitchen apparatus; a sixth carried his abundant plate and wardrobe; and the other two were devoted to the use of his household servants. After the wagons came twelve sumpter-horses, a monkey riding

[1] He never took the major orders till he became archbishop.

[1160-1162 A.D.]

on each, with a groom behind on his knees. Then came the esquires, carrying the shields, and leading the war-horses of their respective knights; then other esquires, falconers, officers of the household, knights, and priests; and last of all appeared the great chancellor himself, with his familiar friends. As Becket passed in this guise, the French were heard to exclaim, "What manner of man must the king of England be, when his chancellor travels in such state!"

Henry encouraged all this pomp and magnificence, and seems to have taken a lively enjoyment in the spectacle, though he sometimes twitted the chancellor on the finery of his attire. All such offices of government as were not performed by the ready and indefatigable king himself were left to Becket, who had no competitor in authority. Secret enemies he had in abundance, but never even a momentary rival in the royal favour. The minister and king lived together like brothers; and according to a contemporary [Peter of Blois] who knew more of Henry than any other that has written concerning him, it was notorious to all men that they were *cor unum et animam unam* (of one heart and one mind in all things). With his chancellor Henry gave free scope to a facetious, frolicsome humour, which was natural to him, though no prince could assume more dignity and sternness when necessary. The chancellor was an admirable horseman, and expert in hunting and hawking and all the sports of the field. These accomplishments, and a never-failing wit and vivacity, made him the constant companion of the king's leisure hours, and the sharer (it is hinted) in less innocent pleasures; for Henry was a very inconstant husband, and had much of the Norman licentiousness.

At the same time, Becket was an able minister, and his administration was not only advantageous to the interests of his master, but, on the whole, extremely beneficial to the nation. Most of the useful measures which distinguished the early part of the king's reign have been attributed to his advice, his discriminating genius, and good intentions. Such were the restoration of internal tranquillity, the curbing of the baronial power, the better appointment of judges, the reform in the currency, and the encouragement given to trade. He certainly could not be accused of entertaining a low notion of the royal prerogative, or of any lukewarmness in exacting the rights of the king. He humbled the lay aristocracy whenever he could, and more than once attacked the extravagant privileges, immunities, and exemptions claimed by the aristocracy of the church. He insisted that the bishops and abbots should pay the scutage for the war of Toulouse like the lay vassals of the crown, and this drew upon him the violent invectives of many of the hierarchy, Gilbert Foliot, the bishop of Hereford, among others, accusing him of plunging the sword into the bosom of mother church, and threatening him with excommunication.

All this tended to convince Henry that Becket was the proper person to nominate to the primacy, as one who had already given proofs of a spirit greatly averse to ecclesiastical encroachments, and that promised to be of the greatest service to him in a project which, in common with other European sovereigns, he had much at heart—namely, to check the growing power of Rome, and curtail the privileges of the priesthood. Although his conduct had not been very priest-like, he was popular; the king's favour and intentions were well known, and accordingly, in 1161, when his old patron, Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, died, the public voice designated Becket as the man who must inevitably succeed him; and after a vacancy of about thirteen months, during which Henry drew the revenues, he was appointed primate of all England.

BECKET BECOMES ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

From that moment Becket was an altered man: the soldier, statesman, hunter, courtier, man of the world, and man of pleasure became a rigid and ascetic monk, renouncing even the innocent enjoyments of life, together with the service of his more friend than master, and resolving to perish by a slow martyrdom rather than suffer the king to invade the smallest privilege of the church. Although he then retained, and afterwards showed a somewhat inconsistent anxiety to keep certain other worldly honours and places of trust, he resigned the chancellorship in spite of the wishes of the king; he discarded all his former companions and magnificent retinue; he threw off his splendid attire; he discharged his choice cooks and his cup-bearers, to surround himself with monks and beggars (whose feet he daily washed), to clothe himself in sackcloth, to eat the coarsest food, and drink water rendered bitter by the mixture of unsavoury herbs. The rest of his penitence, his prayers, his works of charity in hospitals and pest-houses soon caused his name to be revered as that of a saint, and his person to be followed by the prayers and acclamations of the people. With the views the king was known to entertain in church matters, the collision was inevitable; yet it certainly was the archbishop who began the contest.

In 1163, about a year after his elevation, Becket raised a loud complaint on the usurpations by the king and laity of the rights and property of the church. He claimed houses and lands which, if they ever had been included in the endowments of the see of Canterbury, had been for generations in the possession of lay families. It is curious to see castles and places of war figuring in his list. From the king himself he demanded the important castle of Rochester. From the earl of Clare—whose family had possessed them in fief ever since the Conquest—he demanded the strong castle and the barony of Tunbridge; and from other barons possessions of a like nature. But to complete the indignation of Henry, who had laid it down as an indispensable and unchangeable rule of government that no vassal who held *in capite* of the crown should be excommunicated without his previous knowledge and consent, he hurled the thunders of the church at the head of William de Eynsford, a military tenant of the crown, for forcibly ejecting a priest collated to the rectory of that manor by the archbishop; and for pretending, as lord of the manor, to a right over that living. When Henry ordered him to revoke the sentence, Becket told him that it was not for the king to inform him whom he should absolve and whom excommunicate—a right and faculty appertaining solely to the church. The king then resorted from remonstrances to threats of vengeance; and Becket, bending for a while before the storm, absolved the knight, but reluctantly and with a bad grace.

In the course of the following year the king matured his project for subjecting the clergy to the authority of the civil courts for murder, felony, and other civil crimes; and to this reform, in a council held at Westminster, he formally demanded the assent of the archbishop and the other prelates. The leniency of the ecclesiastical courts to offenders in holy orders seemed almost to give an immunity to crime; and a recent case, in which a clergyman had been but slightly punished for the most atrocious of offences, called aloud for a change of court and practice, and lent unanswerable arguments to the ministers and advocates of the king. The bishops, however, with one voice, rejected the proposed innovations; upon which Henry asked them if they would merely promise to observe the ancient customs of the realm. Becket

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and his brethren, with the exception only of Hilary, bishop of Chichester, answered that they would observe them, "saving their order." On this the king immediately deprived the archbishop of the manor of Eye and the castle of Berkhampstead.

THE CONSTITUTIONS OF CLARENDON

Finding, however, that the bishops fell from his side, and being on one hand menaced by the king and lay nobles, and on the other, it is said, advised to submit by the pope himself, Becket shortly afterwards, at a great council held at Clarendon,[1] in Wiltshire (January 25th, 1164), consented to sign a series of enactments embodying the several points insisted upon by the king, and hence called the Constitutions of Clarendon, but he refused to put his seal to them, and immediately after withdrew from the court, and even from the service of the altar, to subject himself to the harshest penance for having acted contrary to his inward conviction. Subsequently the pope rejected the Constitutions of Clarendon, with the exception only of six articles of minor importance; and the archbishop was then encouraged to persist, by the only superior he acknowledged in this world.[c]

The Constitutions of Clarendon constitute one of the most important documents in the history of the relations between church and state in England. They purport to be, and it is now pretty generally accepted, despite the dissent of Lingard[d] and some other Catholic writers, that they are a report of the usages and customs of the Conqueror and his sons, particularly of Henry I, in regard to the disputed points. The most important points laid down in the Constitutions were these: disputes concerning advowsons and presentations to be tried in the king's court; criminous clerks to be tried in the king's court; no clergyman to leave the realm without the king's consent; appeals allowed from the ecclesiastical courts to the king; no tenant-in-chief or royal minister to be excommunicated without the king's consent; the clergy to hold their lands as tenants-in-chief, and to perform all duties and attend the king's court with other tenants-in-chief; elections of archbishops, bishops, and abbots to take place by the king's order in the king's chapel, the man elected to do homage for his lands before consecration; sons of villeins not to be allowed to take clerical orders without the consent of their lord expressly accorded.

Speaking of the Constitutions, Bishop Stubbs[i] characterises them as part of a great scheme of administrative reform, bringing the debatable ground between the spiritual and temporal powers within the reach of common justice. He asserts that they are in no sense the engine of tyranny or secular spite, no mere weapon of controversy; but calculated to abolish the lawlessness due to professional jealousy. But this is the correct view as emphasised, he declares, by the fact that the Constitutions of Clarendon served as a guide to the customary practice of a later period in all similar matters. And in regard to a question such as this, the opinion of Stubbs must rank before that of almost every other commentator.[a]

[1] "The assembly at Clarendon seems to have been the most considerable of those which met under the name of the Great or the Common Council of the Realm since the Norman invasion. They were not yet called by the name of a parliament. But whatever difficulty may exist concerning the qualifications of their constituent members, there is no reason to doubt that the fulness of legislative authority was exercised by the king only when he was present in such assemblies, and acted with their advice and consent."—MACKINTOSH.[m]

THE FALL OF BECKET

The king now assembled a great council in the town of Northampton, and summoned the archbishop to appear before it. He was charged, in the first place, with a breach of allegiance and acts of contempt against the king. He offered a plea in excuse, but Henry swore, "by God's eyes," that he would have justice in its full extent, and the court condemned Becket to forfeit all his goods and chattels; but this forfeiture was immediately commuted for a fine of £500. On the third day, he was required to render an account of all his receipts from vacant abbeys and bishoprics during his chancellorship, the balance due thereon to the crown being set down at the enormous sum of 44,000 marks.

Becket now perceived that the king was bent on his utter ruin. For a moment he was overpowered; but, recovering his firmness and self-possession, which never forsook him for long intervals, he said he was not bound to plead on that count, seeing that, at his consecration as archbishop, he had been publicly released by the king from all such claims. He demanded a conference with the bishops; but these dignitaries had already declared for the court, and the majority of them now advised him to resign the primacy, as the only step which could restore peace to the church and the nation. His indomitable mind, however, yielded none of its firmness and, we must add, its pride. He considered the bishops cowards and time-servers; and resolved to retain that post from which, having once been placed in it, it was held, by all law and custom, he could never be deposed by the temporal power. On the morning of the decisive day (October 18th, 1164), he celebrated the mass of St. Stephen, the first martyr, the office of which begins with these words: "*Sederunt principes et adversum me loquebantur*" (Princes also did sit and speak against me); Ps. cxix., 23.

After the mass, he set out for the court, arrayed in his pontifical robes. He went on horseback, bearing the archiepiscopal cross in his right hand and holding the reins in his left. When he dismounted at the palace, one of his suffragans would have borne the cross before him in the usual manner, but he would not let it go out of his hands. "But," said the archbishop of York, an old rival and enemy of Becket, "it is defying the king, our lord, to come in this fashion to his court; but the king has a sword, the point of which is sharper than that of thy pastoral staff." As the primate entered, the king rose from his seat, and withdrew to an inner apartment, whither the barons and bishops soon followed him, leaving Becket alone in the vast hall, or attended only by a few of his clerks or the inferior clergy, the whole body of which, unlike the dignitaries of the church, inclined to his person and cause. Becket seated himself on a bench, and still holding his cross erect calmly awaited the event. He was not made to wait long: the bishop of Exeter, terrified at the excessive exasperation of the sovereign, came forth from the inner apartment, and throwing himself on his knees implored the primate to have pity on himself and his brethren the bishops, for the king had vowed to slay the first of them that should attempt to excuse his conduct. "Thou fearest?" replied Becket; "flee then—thou canst not understand the things that are of God!" Soon afterwards, the rest of the bishops appeared in a body, and Hilary of Chichester, speaking in the name of all, said: "Thou wast our primate, but now we disavow thee, because, after having promised faith to the king, our common lord, and sworn to maintain his royal customs, thou hast endeavoured to destroy them, and hast broken thine oath. We

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proclaim thee, then, a traitor, and tell thee we will no longer obey a perjured archbishop, but place ourselves and our cause under the protection of our lord the pope, and summon thee to answer us before him." "I hear," said Becket; and he deigned no further reply.

According to Roger of Hoveden,[e] the archbishop was accused in the council chamber of the impossible crime of magic; and the barons pronounced a sentence of imprisonment against him. The door of that chamber soon opened, and Robert, earl of Leicester, followed by the barons, stepped forth into the hall to read the sentence. The archbishop rose, and, interrupting him, said, "Son and earl, hear me first. Thou knowest with how much faith I served the king—with how much reluctance, and only to please him, I accepted my present charge, and in what manner I was declared free from all secular claims whatsoever. Touching the things which happened before my consecration I ought not to answer, nor will I answer. You, moreover, are all my children in God; and neither law nor reason permits you to sit in judgment upon your father. I forbid you therefore to judge me; I decline your tribunal, and refer my quarrel to the decision of the pope. To him I appeal: and now, under the holy protection of the Catholic church and the apostolic see, I depart in peace."

After this counter-appeal to the power which his adversaries had been the first to invoke, Becket slowly strode through the crowd towards the door of the hall. When near the threshold, the spirit of the soldier, which was not yet extinguished by the aspirations of the saint, blazed forth in a withering look and a few hasty but impassioned words. Some of the courtiers and attendants of the king threw at him straw or rushes, which they gathered from the floor, and called him traitor and false perjurer. Turning round and drawing himself up to his full height, he cried, "If my holy calling did not forbid it, I would make my answer with my sword to those cowards who call me traitor!" He then mounted his horse amidst the acclamations of the lower clergy and common people, and rode in a sort of triumph to his lodgings, the populace shouting, "Blessed be God, who hath delivered his servant from the hands of his enemies!" The strength of Becket's party was in the popular body. In the course of the evening he sent to the king to ask leave to retire beyond sea, and he was told that he should receive an answer on the following morning. Becket, however, stole out of the town of Northampton at the dead of night, disguised as a simple monk, and calling himself Brother Dearman; and being followed only by two clerks and a domestic servant, he hastened towards the coast, hiding by day and pursuing his journey by night. The season was far advanced, and the stormy winds of November swept the waters of the Channel when he reached the coast; but Becket embarked in a small boat, and after many perils and fatigues landed at Gravelines, in Flanders.

From the seaport of Gravelines he and his companions walked on foot to the monastery of St. Bertin, at St. Omer, where he waited a short time the success of his applications to the king of France and the pope, Alexander III, who had fixed his residence for a time in the city of Sens. Their answers were most favourable; for, fortunately for Becket, the jealousy and disunion between the kings of France and England disposed Louis to protect the obnoxious exile, in order to vex and weaken Henry; and the pope, turning a deaf ear to a magnificent embassy despatched to him by the English sovereign, determined to support the cause of the primate as that of truth, of justice, and the church. The splendid abbey of Pontigny, in Burgundy, was assigned to him as an honourable and secure asylum; and the pope re-

invested him with his archiepiscopal dignity, which he had surrendered into his hands.

As soon as Henry was informed of these particulars, he issued writs to the sheriffs of England, commanding them to seize all rents and possessions of the primate within their jurisdictions, and to detain all bearers of appeals to the pope till the king's pleasure should be made known to them. He also commanded the justices of the kingdom to detain, in like manner, all bearers of papers, whether from the pope or Becket, that purported to pronounce excommunication or interdict on the realm. The primate's name was struck out of the liturgy, and the revenues of every clergyman who had either followed him into France or had sent him aid and money were seized by the crown. If Henry's vengeance had stopped here it might have been excused, if not justified; but, irritated to madness by the tone of defiance his enemy assumed in a foreign country, he proceeded to further vindictive and most disgraceful measures, issuing one common sentence of banishment against all who were connected with Becket, either by the ties of relationship or of friendship. The list of proscription contained four hundred names, for the wives and children of Becket's friends were included. Pontigny was beset by these exiles, but Becket finally succeeded in relieving their immediate wants by interesting the king of France, the queen of Sicily, and the pope, in their favour.

THE WELSH AND BRETON REVOLTS

In 1165, the year after Becket's flight, Henry sustained no small disgrace from the result of a campaign, in which he personally commanded, against the Welsh. That hardy people had risen once more in arms in 1163, but had been defeated by an Anglo-Norman army, which subsequently plundered and wasted with fire the county of Carmarthen. Somewhat more than a year later a nephew of Rees-ap-Gryffiths, king of South Wales, was found dead in his bed; and the uncle, asserting he had been assassinated by the secret emissaries of a neighbouring Norman baron, collected the mountaineers of the south, and began a fierce and successful warfare, in which he was presently joined by his old allies, Gwynedd of North Wales and Owen Cyvelioch, the leader of the clans of Powysland. One Norman castle after another fell, and, when hostilities had continued for some time, the Welsh pushed their incursions forward into the level country.

The king, turning at length his attention from the church quarrel, which had absorbed it, drew together an army and hastened to the Welsh marches. At his approach the mountaineers withdrew "to their starting-holes"—their woods and strait passages. Henry, without regard to difficulties and dangers, followed them, and a general action was fought on the banks of the Cieroc. The Welsh were defeated, and fled to their uplands. Henry, still following them, penetrated as far as the lofty Berwin, at the foot of which he encamped. A sudden storm of rain set in, and continued until all the streams were fearfully swollen, and the valley was deluged. Meanwhile the natives gathered on the ridges of the mountain of Berwin; but it appears to have been more from the war of the elements than of man that the king's army retreated in great disorder and with some loss. Henry had hitherto showed himself remarkably free from the cruelty of his age, but his mind was now embittered, and in a hasty moment he resolved to take a barbarous vengeance on the persons of the noble hostages whom the Welsh princes had placed in his hands, seven years before,

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as pledges of their tranquillity and allegiance. The eyes of the males were picked out of their heads, and the noses and ears of the females were cut off.

This reverse in England was soon followed by successes on the Continent. A formidable insurrection broke out in Brittany against Henry's subservient ally Conan, who applied to him for succour, according to the terms of the treaty of alliance. The troops of the king entered by the frontier of Normandy, under pretext of defending the legitimate duke of the Bretons against his revolted subjects. Henry soon made himself master of Dol, and several other towns, which he kept and garrisoned with his own soldiers. Conan had shown himself utterly incapable of managing the fierce Breton nobles, by whose excesses and cruelties the poor people were ground to the dust. Henry's power and abilities were well known to the suffering Bretons, and a considerable party, including the priests of the country, rallied round him, and hailed him as a deliverer. Conan resigned the remnant of his authority into the hands of his protector, who governed the state in the name of his son Geoffrey and Conan's heiress Constance, the espousals of these two children being prematurely solemnised.

THE QUARREL WITH BECKET RENEWED

In the month of May the banished archbishop went from Pontigny to Vézelay, near Auxerre, and encouraged by the pope he repaired to the church on the great festival of the Ascension, and mounting the pulpit there, "with book, bell, and candle," solemnly cursed and pronounced the sentence of excommunication against the defenders of the Constitutions of Clarendon, the detainers of the sequestrated property of the church of Canterbury,[1] and those who imprisoned or persecuted either laymen or clergy on his account. This done, he more particularly excommunicated by name Richard de Lucy, Jocelin Baliol, and four other of Henry's courtiers and prime favourites.

The king was at Chinon, in Anjou, when he was startled by this new sign of life given by his adversary. Though in general a great master of his feelings, Henry was subject to excesses of ungovernable fury, and on this occasion he seems fairly to have taken leave of his senses. He cried out that they wanted to kill him, body and soul—that he was wretched in being surrounded by cowards and traitors, not one of whom thought of delivering him from the insupportable vexations caused him by a single man. He took off his cap and dashed it to the ground, undid his girdle, threw his clothes about the room, tore off the silk coverlet from his bed and rolled upon it, and gnawed the straw and rushes—for it appears that this mighty and splendid monarch had no better bed. His resentment did not pass away with this paroxysm; and after writing to the pope and the king of France, he threatened that, if Becket should return and continue to be sheltered at the abbey of Pontigny, which belonged to the Cistercians, he would seize all the estates appertaining to that order within his numerous dominions.

The threat was an alarming one to the monks, and we find Becket removing out of Burgundy to the town of Sens, where a new asylum was appointed him by Louis. A paltry war was begun and ended by a truce, all within a few months; it was followed the next year by another war, equally

[1 "It must always be remembered," says Freeman,[1] "that the second quarrel, the quarrel in which Thomas died, was wholly distinct from the first, and had to do not with the exemption of clerks from secular jurisdiction but with the rights of the churches of Canterbury and York."]

short and still more inglorious for the French king. Nothing but an empty pride could have been gratified by a series of feudal oaths; but the designations given to his sons on this occasion by the English king contributed to fatal consequences which happened four years later. Prince Henry of England, his eldest son, did homage to his father-in-law, the king of France, for Anjou and Maine, as he had formerly done for Normandy; Prince Richard, his second son, did homage for Aquitaine; and Geoffrey, his third son, for Brittany: and it was afterwards assumed that these ceremonies constituted the boys sovereigns and absolute masters of the several dominions named. At the same time the two kings agreed upon a marriage between Prince Richard of England and Alice, another daughter of the king of France. Sixteen months before these events Henry lost his mother, the empress Matilda, who died at Rouen and was buried in the celebrated abbey of Bec, which she had enriched with the donations of her piety and penitence.

THE RETURN OF BECKET

About this time Henry was prevailed upon to assent to the return of Becket. The kings of France and England met at Montmirail, and Becket was admitted to a conference. Henry insisted on qualifying his agreement to the proposed terms of accommodation by the addition of the words, "saving the honour of his kingdom," a salvo which Becket met by another on his part, saying that he was willing to be reconciled to the king, and obey him in all things, "saving the honour of God and the church." Upon this, Henry, turning to the king of France, said, "Do you know what would happen if I were to admit this reservation? That man would interpret everything displeasing to himself as being contrary to the honour of God, and would so invade all my rights: but to show that I do not withstand God's honour, I will here offer him a concession—what the greatest and holiest of his predecessors did unto the least of mine, that let him do unto me, and I am contented therewith." All present exclaimed that this was enough. But Becket still insisted on his salvo; upon which the king of France said he seemed to wish to be "greater than the saints, and better than St. Peter"; and the nobles present murmured at his unbending pride, and said he no longer merited an asylum in France. The two kings mounted their horses and rode away without saluting Becket, who retired much cast down. No one any longer offered him food and lodging in the name of Louis, and on his journey back to Sens he was reduced to live on the charity of the common people.

In another conference the obnoxious clauses on either side were omitted. The business now seemed in fair train; but when Becket asked from the king the kiss of peace, Henry's irritated feelings prevented him from granting it, and he excused himself by saying it was only a solemn oath taken formerly in a moment of passion never to kiss Becket that hindered him from giving this sign of perfect reconciliation. The primate was resolute to waive no privilege and no ceremony, and this conference was also broken off in anger. Another quarrel between the two kings, which threatened at first to retard the reconciliation between Henry and his primate, was in fact the cause of hastening that event; for hostilities dwindled into a truce, the truce led to another conference between the sovereigns, and the conference to another peace, at which Henry, who was apprehensive that the pope would finally consent to Becket's ardent wishes, and permit him to excommunicate his king by name and pronounce an interdict against the whole kingdom, slowly and

[1170 A.D.]

reluctantly pledged his word to be reconciled forthwith to the dangerous exile. On the 22d of July, 1170, a solemn congress was held in a spacious and pleasant meadow, between Frèteval and La Ferté-Bernard, on the borders of Touraine. The king was there before the archbishop; and as soon as Becket appeared, riding leisurely towards the tent, he spurred his horse to meet him, and saluted him, cap in hand. They then rode apart into the field, and discoursed together for some time in the same familiar manner as in by-gone times. Then, returning to his attendants, Henry said that he found the archbishop in the best possible disposition, and that it would be sinful in him to nourish rancour any longer.

The primate came up, and the forms of reconciliation were completed; always, however, excepting the kiss of peace, which, according to some, Henry promised he would give in England, where they would soon meet. The king, however, condescended to hold Becket's stirrup when he mounted. By their agreement, Becket was to love, honour, and serve the king in as far as an archbishop could "render in the Lord service to his sovereign"; and Henry was to restore immediately all the lands, and livings, and privileges of the church of Canterbury, and to furnish Becket with funds to discharge his debts, and make the journey into England. These terms were certainly not all kept: the lands were not released for four months; and, after many vexatious delays, Becket was obliged to borrow money for his journey. While tarrying on the French coast, he was several times warned that danger awaited him on the opposite shore. This was not improbable, as many resolute men had been suddenly driven from the church lands on which they had fattened for years, and as he was known to carry about his person letters of excommunication from the pope against the archbishop of York and the bishops of London and Salisbury, whom he held to be his chief enemies, and who were men likely to adopt strong measures to prevent his promulgating the terrible sentence. He was even assured that Ranulf de Broc, who had boasted that he would not let the archbishop live to eat a single loaf of bread in England, was lying with a body of soldiers between Canterbury and Dover, in order to intercept him.

But nothing could move Becket, who said seven years of absence were long enough both for the shepherd and his flock, and that he would not stop though he were sure to be cut to pieces as soon as he landed on the opposite coast. The only use he made of the warnings he received was to confide the letters of excommunication to a skilful and devoted messenger, who, preceding him some short time, stole into England without being suspected, and actually delivered them publicly to the three bishops, who were as much startled as if a thunderbolt had fallen at their feet. This last measure seems to have had as much to do with Becket's death as any anger of the king's. As he was on the point of embarking, a vessel arrived from England. The sailors were asked what were the feelings of the good English people towards their archbishop. They replied, that the people would hail his return with transports of joy. This was a good omen, and he no doubt relied much on the popular favour.

He sailed from France in the same gloomy month of the year in which he had begun his exile, and, avoiding Dover, landed at Sandwich on the 1st of December. At the news of his arrival, the mariners, the peasants, and the English burghers flocked to meet him; but none of the rich and powerful welcomed him, and the first persons of rank he saw presented themselves in a menacing attitude. These latter were a sheriff of Kent, Reginald de Warenne, Ranulf de Broc (who had ridden across the country from Dover), and some relatives and allies of the three excommunicated bishops, who carried

swords under their tunics, and drew them when they approached the primate. John of Oxford conjured them to be quiet, lest they should make their king pass for a traitor; but it is probable that the determined countenance of the English multitude made more impression on them than his peaceful words. They retired to their castles, and spread a report among their feudal compeers that Becket was liberating the serfs of the country, who were marching in his train, drunk with joy and hopes of vengeance. At Canterbury the primate was received with acclamations; but still it was only the poor and lowly that welcomed him. A few days after he set out for Woodstock, to visit the king's eldest son, Prince Henry, who had formerly been his pupil. Becket counted much on his influence over the young prince, but the party opposed to him succeeded in preventing his having an opportunity to exert that influence. A royal messenger met him on his journey, and ordered him, in the name of the prince, not to enter any of the royal towns or castles, but to return and remain within his own diocese. The primate obeyed, and returning spent some days at Harrow-on-the-Hill, which belonged to the church of Canterbury. During his stay at Harrow, two of his own clergy, Nigellus de Sackville, who was called "the usurping rector of Harrow," and Robert de Broc, the vicar, a relation of his determined foe Ranulf de Broc, treated him with great disrespect, and when he was departing maimed the horse which carried his provisions.

Becket returned to Canterbury, escorted by a host of poor people, armed with rustic targets and rusty lances. On Christmas Day he ascended the pulpit in the great cathedral church, and delivered an eloquent sermon on the words, "*Venio ad vos mori inter vos*" (I come to die among you). He told his congregation that one of their archbishops had been a martyr, and that they would probably soon see another; "but," he added, "before I depart hence I will avenge some of the wrongs my church has suffered during the last seven years": and he forthwith excommunicated Ranulf and Robert de Broc, and Nigellus the rector of Harrow. This was Becket's last public act. As soon as his messenger from the French coast had delivered his letters, the three bishops excommunicated by them hastened over to the Continent, to demand redress from the king. "We implore it," said the bishops, "both for the sake of royalty and the clergy—for your own repose as well as ours. There is a man who sets England on fire; he marches with troops of horse and armed foot, prowling round the fortresses, and trying to get himself received within them."

The exaggeration was not needed; Henry was seized with one of his most violent fits of fury. "How!" cried he, "a fellow that hath eaten my bread—a beggar that first came to my court on a lame horse—dares insult his king and the royal family, and tread upon the whole kingdom; and not one of the cowards I nourish at my table—not one will deliver me from this turbulent priest!" There were four knights present, who had probably injuries of their own to avenge, and who took this outburst of temper as a sufficient death-warrant; and, without communicating their sudden determination to the king (or, at least, there is no evidence that they did), hurried over to England. Their names were Reginald Fitzurse, William Tracy, Hugh de Morville, and Richard le Breton; and they are described by a contemporary as being barons and servants of the king's bed-chamber. Their intention was not suspected, nor was their absence noticed; and while they were riding with loose rein towards the coast, the king was closeted with his council of barons, who, after some discussion, which seems to have occupied more than one day, appointed three commissioners to go and seize, according to the forms of law, the person of Thomas à Becket, on the charge of high treason.

THE MURDER OF BECKET (1170 A.D.)

But the conspirators, who had bound themselves together by an oath, left the commissioners nothing to do. Three days after Christmas Day they arrived secretly at Saltwood, in the neighbourhood of Canterbury, where the De Broc family had a house; and here, under the cover of night, they arranged their plans. On the 29th of December, having collected a number of adherents to quell the resistance of Becket's attendants and the citizens, in case any should be offered, they proceeded to the monastery of St. Augustine's, at Canterbury, the abbot of which, like nearly all the superior churchmen, was of the king's party. From St. Augustine's they went to the archbishop's palace, and entering his apartment abruptly, about two hours after noon, seated themselves on the floor without saluting him or offering any sign of respect. There was a dead pause—the knights not knowing how to begin, and neither of them liking to speak first. At length Becket asked what they wanted; but still they sat gazing at him with haggard eyes. There were twelve men of the party, besides the four knights. Reginald Fitzurse, feigning a commission from the king, at last spoke. "We come," said he, "that you may absolve the bishops whom you have excommunicated, re-establish the bishops whom you have suspended, and answer for your offences against the king."

Becket replied with boldness and with great warmth, not sparing taunts and invectives. He said that he had published the papal letters of excommunication with the king's consent; that he could not absolve the archbishop of York, whose heinous case was reserved for the pope alone; but that he would remove the censures from the two other bishops, if they would swear to submit to the decisions of Rome. "But of whom then," demanded Reginald, "do you hold your archbishopric—of the king, or of the pope?" "I owe the spiritual rights to God and the pope, and the temporal rights to the king." "How! is it not the king that hath given you all?" Becket's decided negative was received with murmurs, and the knights furiously twisted their long gloves. Three out of the four cavaliers had followed Becket in the days of his prosperity and vainglory, and vowed themselves his liege men. He reminded them of this, and observed it was not for such as they to threaten him in his own house; adding, also, that if he were threatened by all the swords in England, he would not yield. "We will do more than threaten," replied the knights, and then departed.

When they were gone, his attendants loudly expressed their alarm, and blamed him for the rough and provoking tone by which he had inflamed instead of pacifying his enemies; but the prelate silenced the latter part of their discourse by telling them he had no need of their advice, and knew what he ought to do. The barons, with their accomplices, who seemed to have wished, if they could, to avoid bloodshed, finding that threats were ineffectual, put on their coats of mail, and taking each a sword in his hand returned to the palace; but finding that the gate had been shut and barred by the terrified servants, Fitzurse tried to break it open, and the sounds of his ponderous axe rang through the building. The gate might have offered some considerable resistance, but Robert de Broc showed them the way in at a window. The people about Becket had in vain urged him to take refuge in the church; but at this moment the voices of the monks, singing vespers in the choir, striking his ear, he said he would go, as his duty called him thither; and, making his cross-bearer precede him with the crucifix elevated, he traversed

the cloister with slow and measured steps, and entered the church. His servants would have closed and fastened the doors, but he forbade them, saying that the house of God was not to be barricaded like a castle. He had passed through the north transept, and was ascending the steps which led to the choir, when Reginald Fitzurse appeared at the other end of the church, waving his sword, and shouting, "Follow me, loyal servants of the king!" The other conspirators followed him closely, armed like himself from head to foot, and brandishing their swords.

The shades of evening had fallen, and in the obscurity of the vast church, which was broken here and there only by a lamp glimmering before a shrine, Becket might easily have hid himself in the dark and intricate crypts underground, or beneath the roof of the old church. Each of these courses was suggested by his attendants, but he rejected them both, and turned boldly to meet the intruders, followed or preceded by his cross-bearer, the faithful Edward Gryme, the only one who did not flee. A voice shouted, "Where is the traitor?" Becket answered not; but when Reginald Fitzurse said, "Where is the archbishop?" he replied, "Here am I, an archbishop, but no traitor, ready to suffer in my Saviour's name." Tracy pulled him by the sleeve, saying, "Come hither, thou art a prisoner." He pulled back his arm in so violent a manner that he made Tracy stagger forward. They advised him to flee or to go with them; and, on a candid consideration, it seems to us that the conspirators, after all, are entitled to a doubt as to whether they really intended a murder, or were not rather hurried into it by his obstinacy and provoking language. Addressing Fitzurse, he said, "I have done thee many pleasures; why comest thou with armed men into my church?" They told him that he must instantly absolve the bishops. "Never, until they have offered satisfaction," was his answer; and he applied a foul vituperative term to Fitzurse.

"Then die!" exclaimed Fitzurse, striking at his head. The faithful Gryme interposed his arm to save his master; the arm was broken or nearly cut off, and the stroke descended on the primate's head and slightly wounded him. Then another voice cried, "Flee, or thou diest!" but still Becket moved not; but with the blood running down his face, he clasped his hands, and bowing his head, exclaimed, "To God, to St. Mary, to the holy patrons of this church and to St. Denis, I commend my soul and the Church's cause." A second stroke brought him to the ground, close to the foot of St. Bennet's altar; a third, given with such force that the sword was broken against the stone pavement, cleft his skull, and his brains were scattered all about. One of the conspirators put his foot on his neck, and cried, "Thus perishes a traitor!" The conspirators then withdrew, without encountering any hindrance or molestation; but when the fearful news spread through Canterbury and the neighbouring country, the excitement was prodigious, and the inevitable inference was drawn that Becket was a martyr and miracles would be wrought at his tomb.

His old foe, the archbishop of York, ascended the pulpit to announce his death as an infliction of divine vengeance, saying that he had perished in his guilt and pride like Pharaoh. Other ecclesiastics preached that the body of the traitor ought not to be allowed to rest in consecrated ground, but ought to be thrown into a ditch or hung on a gibbet. An attempt was even made to seize the body, but the monks, who received timely warning, concealed it, and hastily buried it in the subterranean vaults of the cathedral. But it was soon found that the public voice, echoed, for its own purposes, by the court of France, was too loud to be drowned in this manner. Louis, whom Henry

had so often humbled, wrote to the pope, imploring him to draw the sword of St. Peter against that horrible persecutor of God, who surpassed Nero in cruelty, Julian in apostasy, and Judas in treachery. He chose to believe, and the French bishops believed with him, that Henry had ordered the murder.

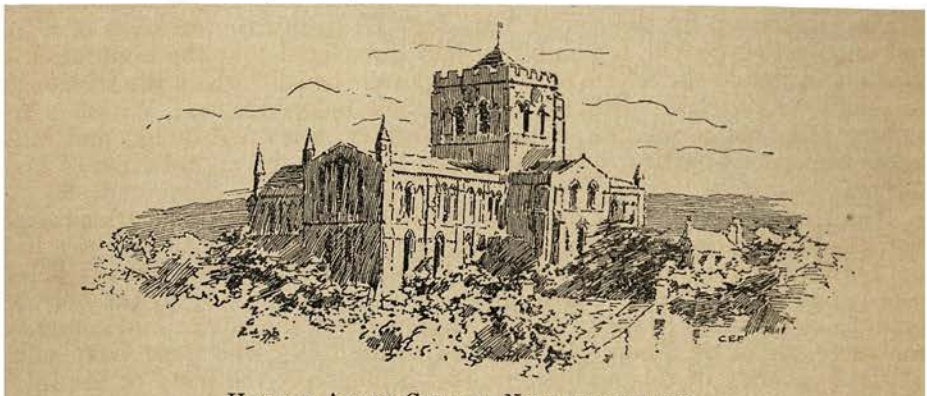
On receiving the intelligence of Becket's assassination, Henry expressed the greatest grief and horror, shut himself up in his room, and refused to receive either food or consolation for three days; and if he took care to have a touching detail of his distressed feelings transmitted to the pope, in which he declared his innocence in the strongest terms, and entreated that censure might be suspended till the facts of the case were examined, such a measure is not to be taken, in itself, as indicating the insincerity of his grief and horror. He must have felt that his own hasty exclamations had led to the deed, and that all the penalties of a deliberate crime would be exacted at his hand.

When Henry's envoys first appeared at Rome—for the pope Alexander was no longer a dependent exile—they were coldly received, and everything seemed to threaten that an interdict would be laid upon the kingdom, and the king excommunicated by name. In the end, however, Alexander rested satisfied with an excommunication, in general terms, of the murderers and the abettors of the crime. It is said that Henry's gold was not idle on this occasion; but the employment of it is rather a proof of the notorious rapacity of the cardinals than of his having a bad cause to plead. In the month of May, 1172, in a council held at Avranches, at which two legates of the pope attended, Henry swore that he had neither ordered nor desired the murder of the archbishop. This oath was not demanded from him, but taken of his own free will. As, however, he could not deny that the assassins might have been moved to the deed by his wrathful words, he consented to maintain two hundred knights during a year for the defence of the Holy Land; and himself to serve, if the pope should require it, for three years against the infidels. At the same time, he engaged to restore all the lands and possessions belonging to the friends of the late archbishop; to permit appeals to be made to the pope in good faith, and without fraud, reserving to himself, however, the right of obliging such appellants as he suspected of evil intentions to give security that they would attempt nothing abroad to the detriment of him or his kingdom. The legates then fully absolved the king; and thus terminated this quarrel, less to Henry's disadvantage than might have been expected. In the short interval of this negotiation he had added a kingdom to his dominions. The year that followed the death of Becket was made memorable by the conquest of Ireland.[c]

THE STATE OF IRELAND

The state of Ireland at this period has been delineated by Giraldus Cambrensis,[k] who twice visited the island—once in the company of his brother, a military adventurer, and afterwards as the chaplain or secretary of John, the youngest of Henry's sons (1182–1185). In three books on the topography and two on the subjugation of Ireland, he has left us the detail of all that he heard, read, and saw. That the credulity of the Welshman was often deceived by fables is evident; nor is it improbable that his partiality might occasionally betray him into unfriendly and exaggerated statements; yet the accuracy of his narrative in the more important points is confirmed by the whole tenor of Irish and English history.

The ancient division of the island into five provinces or kingdoms was still (1185) retained;[1] but the nominal sovereignty over the whole, which for several generations had been possessed by the O'Neils, had of late been assumed by different chieftains, and was now claimed by the O'Connors, kings of Connaught. The seaports, inhabited chiefly by the descendants of the Ostmen [Northmen] were places of some trade. Dublin is styled the rival of London; and the wines of Languedoc were imported in exchange for hides. But the majority of the natives shunned the towns, and lived in huts in the country. They preferred pasturage to agriculture. Restraint and labour were deemed by them the worst of evils; liberty and indolence the most desirable of blessings. The children owed little to the care of their parents, but acquired, as they grew up, elegant forms, which, aided by their lofty stature and florid complexion, excited the admiration of the invaders. Their



HEXHAM ABBEY CHURCH, NORTHUMBERLAND
(Twelfth century)

clothing was scanty, fashioned after the manner which to the eye of Giraldus appeared barbarous, and spun from the wool of their sheep, sometimes dyed, but generally in its natural state. In battle they measured the valour of the combatants by their contempt of artificial assistance; and, when they beheld the English knights covered with iron, hesitated not to pronounce them devoid of real courage. Their own arms were a short lance, or two javelins, a sword called a skene, about fifteen inches long, and a hatchet of steel called a "sparthe." The sparthe was wielded with one hand, but with such address and impetuosity as generally to penetrate through the best-tempered armour. To bear it was the distinction of freemen. They constructed their houses of timber and wicker-work. Their churches were generally built of the same materials; and when Archbishop Malachy began to erect a church of stone the very attempt excited an insurrection of the people, who reproached him with abandoning the customs of his country and introducing those of Gaul. In temper the natives are described as irascible and inconstant, warmly attached to their friends, faithless and vindictive towards their enemies. Music was the acquirement in which they principally sought to excel; and the Welshman, Giraldus, with all his partiality for his own country, has the honesty to assign to the Irish the superiority on the harp.

[1] These provinces were Leinster, Desmond or South Munster, Tuamond or North Munster, Connaught, and Ulster. Meath was considered as annexed to the dignity of monarch of Ireland.

That the clergy of Ireland in the sixth century differed in some points of discipline from the clergy of the neighbouring churches is plain from the disputes respecting the time of Easter and the form of the tonsure: that they agreed in all points of doctrine is equally evident from the history of these very disputes, from the cordial reception of the Irish ecclesiastics in Gaul and Italy, and from the easy amalgamation of their rules with those of the continental monks. During the invasions of the Northmen they were the principal sufferers; at the return of tranquillity their churches and possessions fell, in many instances at least, into the hands of laymen, and were retained, according to the custom of tanistry, in the possession of the same family for several generations.

The proximity of Ireland to England, and the inferiority of the natives in the art of war, had suggested the idea of conquest to both William the Conqueror and the first Henry. The task which they had abandoned was seriously taken up by the son of Matilda. To justify the invasion of a free and unoffending people, his ambition had discovered that the civilisation of their manners and the reform of their clergy were benefits which the Irish ought cheerfully to purchase with the loss of their independence. Within a few months after his coronation, John of Salisbury, a learned monk, and afterwards bishop of Chartres, was despatched to solicit the approbation of Pope Adrian.

The envoy was charged to assure his holiness that Henry's principal object was to provide instruction for an ignorant people, to extirpate vice from the Lord's vineyard, and to extend to Ireland the annual payment of Peter's pence; but that as every Christian island was the property of the holy see, he did not presume to make the attempt without the advice and consent of the successor of St. Peter. The pontiff, Adrian IV,[1] who must have smiled at the hypocrisy of this address, praised in his reply the piety of his dutiful son; accepted and asserted the right of sovereignty which had been so liberally admitted; expressed the satisfaction with which he assented to the king's request; and exhorted him to bear always in mind the conditions on which that assent had been grounded. At the following Michaelmas a great council was held to deliberate on the enterprise: but a strong opposition was made by the empress mother and the barons; other projects offered themselves to Henry's ambition, and the papal letter was consigned to oblivion in the archives of the castle of Winchester.

DERMOT AND PEMBROKE

Fourteen years after this singular negotiation a few Welsh adventurers landed in Ireland at the solicitation of one of the native princes. Dermot, king of Leinster, had several years before carried away by force Dervorgil (Derbforgaill), the wife of O'Rourke, prince of Brefni or Leitrim. The lady appears to have been a willing captive; but the husband, to avenge his disgrace, claimed the assistance of Turlough (Tordelbach) O'Connor, monarch of Ireland, and the adulterer was compelled to restore the fugitive. From this period Dermot and O'Rourke adhered to opposite interests in all the

[1 Adrian IV was the only Englishman who ever wore the papal crown. His name was originally Nicholas Breakspear. He was born in Hertfordshire some time before 1100, but was educated for the priesthood on the Continent, and finally became abbot of St. Rufus in Provençe. In 1146 he was created cardinal-bishop of Albano by Pope Eugenius III, and in December, 1154, was elected to the papacy, retaining the throne until his death in 1159.]

disputes which agitated the island. During the life of Maurice (Muircertach) O'Loughlin, who succeeded O'Connor in the sovereign authority, Dermot braved the power of his adversary; but on the death of that prince, the house of O'Connor resumed the ascendancy: O'Rourke destroyed Ferns, the capital of Leinster (1166); and Dermot was driven out of the island.

The exile, abandoned by his countrymen, solicited the assistance of strangers. Passing through England to Aquitaine, he did homage for his dominions to Henry, and obtained permission to enlist adventurers in his service. His offers were accepted by Richard de Clare, surnamed Strongbow, earl of Pembroke, a nobleman of ruined fortunes and in disgrace with his sovereign, and by two brothers, Robert Fitzstephen and Maurice Fitzgerald, Welsh gentlemen, distressed in their circumstances and ready to engage in any desperate enterprise.[1] Relying on their promises, Dermot returned to Ireland, and found, during the winter months, a secure asylum in the monastery of Ferns. In the beginning of the summer of 1169 Fitzstephen landed in Bannow Bay, accompanied by one hundred and forty knights and three hundred archers. Dermot joined them with a body of natives, and by the reduction of Wexford struck dismay into the hearts of his enemies. He then led his forces against Donald, the prince of Ossory, a ferocious chieftain, whose jealousy a few years before had deprived the eldest of Dermot's sons of sight, and afterwards of life. The men of Ossory, five thousand in number, amid their forests and marshes, defended themselves with success; but by a pretended flight they were drawn into the plain, where a charge of the English cavalry bore them to the ground, and the fallen were immediately despatched by the natives under the banner of Dermot. A trophy of two hundred heads was erected at the feet of that savage, who testified his joy by clapping his hands, leaping in the air, and pouring out thanksgivings to the Almighty. As he turned over the heap, he discovered the head of a former enemy. His hatred was rekindled at the sight, and seizing it by the ears, in a paroxysm of fury he tore off the nose with his teeth.

The ambition of Dermot now aspired to the sovereignty of the island. With this view he solicited reinforcements from England, and reminded the earl of Pembroke of his engagements. "We have seen," says Dermot, in a singular letter preserved by Giraldus,[k] "the storks and the swallows. The birds of the spring have paid us their annual visit, and at the warning of the blast have departed to other climes. But our best friend has hitherto disappointed our hopes. Neither the breezes of the summer nor the storms of the winter have conducted him to these shores." His expectations were soon realised by the arrival of Fitzgerald and Raymond, with twenty knights and one hundred and seventy archers (1170). The strangers landed four miles to the south of Waterford, and were immediately opposed by O'Phelan at the head of three thousand men. They retired before the multitude to the rock of Dundolf, where, aided by the advantage of the ground, they repelled every attack. Fame exaggerated the loss of the natives to five hundred men; but the glory of the victory was sullied by the cruelty of the invaders, who wantonly precipitated seventy of their captives from the promontory into the sea.

When Strongbow (Pembroke) despatched the last reinforcement, he had obtained an ambiguous permission from Henry: he now followed with twelve hundred archers and knights, though he had recently received an absolute

[1] These brothers were, by different husbands, the sons of Nesta, a Welsh princess, who while she was the mistress of Henry I had borne to that monarch Robert, the celebrated earl of Gloucester.

prohibition. At the third assault Waterford was taken. Dermot eagerly marched against Dublin. It was carried by storm, and the victor testified by numerous donations his gratitude for the services of his auxiliaries. But while he was meditating new conquests, he was arrested by death; and Strongbow, who had previously married his daughter Eva, and had been appointed his successor, immediately assumed the royal authority. The most powerful efforts were now made to expel the strangers from Dublin. The former inhabitants, who had escaped under Asculf the Ostman, attempted, with the aid of sixty Norwegian vessels, to regain the city. They were scarcely repulsed when Roderick, king of Connaught, sat down before it. In the ninth week of the siege he was surprised by a sally from the garrison, and his followers were completely dispersed. Lastly, O'Rourke with the natives of Meath undertook to avenge the cause of his country. He lost his son and the bravest of his associates.

HENRY II IN IRELAND (1171 A.D.)

When the Welsh adventurers first sailed to the aid of Dermot, Henry had viewed the enterprise with contempt; their subsequent success awakened his jealousy. As soon as he heard of the capture of Waterford, he forbade by proclamation any of his subjects to cross over to Ireland, and commanded all who had already joined in the invasion to return under the penalty of forfeiture. Strongbow was alarmed, and despatched Raymond to lay his conquests at the feet of his sovereign. The messenger was unable to procure an answer. Henry of Mountmaurice followed, and was equally unsuccessful. The earl, convinced of his danger, now adopted the advice of his friends, and repairing to England waited on Henry at Newnham, in Gloucestershire. At first he was ignominiously refused an audience; and to recover the royal favour renewed his homage and fealty, surrendered to Henry the city of Dublin, the surrounding cantreds, and the castles and harbours in his possession, and consented to hold the remainder of his lands in Ireland as tenant-in-chief of the English crown.

With this the king was satisfied; the acquisitions of the adventurers had been transferred to himself; and he permitted Strongbow to accompany him to Milford Haven, where he embarked with five hundred knights, their esquires, and a numerous body of archers, on board a fleet of four hundred transports. He landed at Waterford, received during a hasty progress the homage of the neighbouring princes, and directed his march towards Dublin, where a temporary palace of timber had been erected for his reception (November, 1171). It was his wish rather to allure than to compel submission; and the chieftains, whom hope, or fear, or example daily led to his court, were induced to swear obedience to his authority, were invited to his table, and were taught to admire the magnificence and affability of their new sovereign. But while so many others crowded to Dublin, O'Connor refused to meet a superior; and the severity of the season, with the inundation of the country, placed him beyond the reach of resentment. He condescended, however, to see the royal messengers on the banks of the Shannon, and to make in their presence a nominal submission. The princes of Ulster alone obstinately preserved their independence: they would neither visit the king nor own his authority.

When in the preceding year Dermot let loose his foreign auxiliaries against his countrymen, the Irish bishops, surprised at their unexampled success,

had assembled at Armagh, and looking on the strangers as the ministers of the divine wrath had enacted that every slave who had been imported from England should be immediately restored to his freedom. After the arrival of Henry they held another synod at Cashel, under the presidency of the papal legate, the bishop of Lismore; signed a formal recognition of the king's sovereignty; and framed several canons for the reform of their church. By these, polygamy and incestuous marriages were prohibited; the clergy were declared exempt from the exactions of their chieftains; the payment of tithes was enjoined; the form was prescribed by which the dying ought to dispose of their property; and provision was made for the decent sepulture of the dead.

It had been the wish of Henry to spend the following summer in Ireland, to penetrate to the western and northern coasts, and by the erection of castles in favourable situations to insure the submission of the country. But he was recalled to England in the spring by affairs of greater urgency, and left the island without having added an inch of territory to the acquisitions of the original adventurers. His nominal sovereignty was, indeed, extended over four out of five provinces, but his real authority was confined to the cantreds in the vicinity of his garrisons. There the feudal customs and services were introduced and enforced; in the rest of the island the national laws prevailed; and the Irish princes felt no other change in their situation than that they had promised to a distant prince the obedience which they had previously paid to the king of Connaught.

At Henry's departure the supreme command had been given by him to Hugh de Lacy, with the county of Meath for his fee. But during the war which afterwards ensued between the king and his sons, De Lacy was summoned to the assistance of the father, and the government of the English conquests reverted to the earl of Pembroke, who possessed neither the authority to check the rapacity of his followers nor the power to overawe the hostility of the natives. The castles which had been fortified in Meath were burnt to the ground; Dublin was repeatedly insulted; four English knights, and four hundred Ostmen, their followers, fell in a battle in Ossory (1174); and the governor himself was compelled to seek refuge within the castle of Waterford. A seasonable supply of forces raised the siege, and restored the preponderance of the English adventurers.

It was during this period, when his authority in Ireland was nearly annihilated, that Henry bethought him of the letter which he had formerly procured from Pope Adrian. It had been forgotten during almost twenty years; now it was drawn from obscurity, was intrusted to William Fitzadelm and Nicholas, prior of Wallingford, and was read by them with much solemnity to a synod of Irish bishops. How far it served to convince these prelates that the king was the rightful sovereign of the island, we are left to conjecture; but the next year O'Connor sent the archbishop of Tuam to Windsor, and a treaty of "final concord" was concluded by the ministers of the two princes.

In this instrument Henry grants to his liege man, Roderick O'Connor, king of Connaught, that he should be king under the English crown as long as he faithfully performed the services to which he was bound; that, on the annual payment of tribute, he should possess his own lands in peace, as he did before the invasion; that he should have under him all the other chieftains of Ireland, who should hold their lands in peace, as long as they were faithful to the king of England and paid him tribute; that Roderick should collect that tribute and transmit it to Henry; should punish the defaulters;

and, if it were necessary, call in for that purpose the aid of the king's constable; that the tribute should be every tenth merchantable hide on the lands of the natives; that the authority of Roderick should extend over the whole island with the exception of the demesne lands belonging to Henry and those belonging to his barons—that is, Dublin, Meath, Wexford, and Waterford, as far as Duncannon. Roderick afterwards surrendered one of his sons to Henry as a hostage for his fidelity.

But treaties could not bind the passions of either the natives or the foreigners. The former, urged by national resentment, seized every opportunity of wreaking their vengeance on their despoilers; the latter, for the most part men of lawless habits and desperate fortunes, could support themselves only by plunder, and therefore sought every pretext to create or to prolong hostilities. Strongbow died in 1177, leaving two children by Eva, a son, who followed his father to the grave, and a daughter, named Isabella, heiress to the kingdom of Leinster. With the guardianship of this lady, Henry conferred the government on Fitzadelm, a minister fond of money and addicted to pleasure, who shunned the dangers of war and enriched himself at the expense of his inferiors. De Courcy, a rough soldier, and second in command, took advantage of the discontent of the army, and with three hundred and fifty men, in defiance of the governor's prohibition, made an incursion into the province of Ulster (1178). They hoped to surprise Mac Dunlevy, the king, in his residence at Downpatrick: to their astonishment, with the Irish chief they found the Cardinal Vivian, a legate from Rome, on his road towards Dublin.

This ecclesiastic, unable to dissuade the invaders, gave his benediction to Mac Dunlevy, and exhorted him to fight bravely in the defence of his country. But though the men of Ulster were famed for their courage, they were no match for the superior discipline and armour of their opponents; in the three battles victory declared for De Courcy, and the conqueror was able to retain the possession of Downpatrick, despite of the constant and occasionally successful hostilities of the natives.

PRINCE JOHN MADE LORD OF IRELAND (1185 A.D.)

Henry had obtained from the pontiff a bull empowering him to enfeoff any one of his sons with the lordship of Ireland. In a great council assembled at Oxford he conferred that dignity on John, a boy in his twelfth year; and, cancelling the grants which he had formerly made, retained for himself in demesne all the seaports with the adjoining cantreds, and distributed the rest of the English possessions among the chief adventurers, to be holden by the tenure of military service of him and of his son John. At the same time Hugh de Lacy was appointed lord deputy, an officer whose talents and administration have been deservedly praised. He rebuilt the castles in Meath, invited the fugitives to resettle in their former homes, and by his equity and prudence reconciled them to the dominion of strangers. But his merit, joined to his marriage with a daughter of Roderick O'Connor, alarmed the jealous temper of Henry, and he received an order to resign his authority to Philip de Worcester, who in a few months was superseded by the arrival of Prince John, attended by a numerous force (March, 1185).

Unfortunately the counsellors and favourites of the prince were Normans, who viewed with equal contempt the chieftains of the Irish and the adventurers from Wales. The former they irritated by insults, ridiculing their garb, and

plucking their beards; the latter they offended by removing them from the garrison towns to serve in the marches. Their thirst for wealth made no distinction between friend or foe. Even the lands of the septs, which had hitherto proved faithful, were now divided; and the exiles, from the desire of revenge, their local knowledge, and their gradual improvement in the art of war, soon became formidable adversaries. The strangers lost several of their most fortunate leaders, with the greater part of their retainers; the English ascendancy rapidly declined; the council was divided by opposite opinions and angry recriminations; and John, after an inglorious rule of nine months, was recalled by his father. De Courcy, who succeeded him (1186), by repeated and laborious expeditions preserved, if he did not extend, the English conquests, which comprised the maritime districts of Down, Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, and Cork, connected with each other by a long chain of forts.

This was the period when the natives, had they united in the cause of their country, might in all probability have expelled the invaders. But they wasted their strength in domestic feuds. Even the family of their national sovereign was divided by a most sanguinary contest. Murrough, the son of Roderick, with the aid of an English partisan, had invaded the territory of his father. He was taken, imprisoned, and deprived of sight. His partisans rescued him, and Roderick retired to a convent. By the English of Munster the old king was restored to his throne; his son Connor Mainmoy compelled him once more to return to his asylum. Mainmoy was murdered by one of his brothers—that brother fell by the revenge of a nephew; and Connaught presented a dreadful scene of anarchy and carnage, till another brother, Cathal the bloody-handed, subdued every competitor, and obtained the pre-eminence which had been enjoyed by his father.

That the reader might form an accurate notion of the manner in which the authority of the English princes was originally established in Ireland, we have conducted the narrative of these events to the death of Henry. It is now time to revert to the personal history of that monarch.[d]

THE REVOLT OF THE KING'S SONS (1172 A.D.)

During his expedition to Ireland Henry appears to have devoted himself entirely to the concerns of that new accession to his authority. He spent the Christmas of 1171 in Dublin. At the end of March, 1172, vessels arrived from England and Aquitaine, and he immediately resolved to leave the island. It is remarkable that for five months there had been no maritime communication from England or the Continent. It is held that this suspension of intercourse was not accidental, and that the king prevented any vessel coming to disturb him with the announcement that the spiritual arm was uplifted against him on account of the murder of Becket.

When at length an encouraging issue of five months' debate was announced to him, his characteristic vigour was displayed by his immediate presence in Normandy. "The king of England neither rides nor sails; he flies with the rapidity of a bird," said the king of France. Henry [as we have already related] met the legates; solemnly swore in the cathedral of Avranches that he was innocent in word or deed of the murder of the archbishop; and was as solemnly absolved of all censure, upon agreeing to certain concessions in favour of the church, which had the effect of suspending the operations of the Constitutions of Clarendon. Henry was now in his fortieth year, perhaps with that touch of gray in his hair which Peter of Blois has described, but in

[1172 A.D.]

the most perfect vigour of his powerful understanding and energetic will. He had four sons living—Henry, in his eighteenth year; Richard, in his fifteenth; Geoffrey, in his fourteenth; and John, in his sixth. These were the children of Queen Eleanor. In 1172 some influence had been at work to produce a powerful confederacy against the great king of England; and in this confederacy Queen Eleanor and her sons, Henry, Richard, and Geoffrey, were involved. The young Henry had been a second time crowned at Westminster, with his wife, the daughter of the king of France; and he was termed king from this circumstance. It was not unusual, according to a custom of the French monarchy, to crown the heir-apparent. But Prince Henry, at the instigation, it is believed, of his father-in-law, set up a pretension to divide the royal power with his father, and demanded that the king should resign to him either England or Normandy. In the same spirit Richard, the boy of fifteen, claimed Aquitaine because he had performed homage to Louis for that duchy; and the other boy of fourteen, Geoffrey, claimed the immediate possession of Brittany.

The rebellious sons fled from the court of their father to the French king, and their mother soon followed. The bishops of Normandy exhorted her, under pain of ecclesiastical censure, to return with her sons. King Henry took a more effectual mode—he secured her person, and kept her in close durance for many years. This was something more than a domestic quarrel. Louis of France dreaded the great extent of Henry's possessions and stood in awe of his talents. The people of Normandy, and Aquitaine, and Brittany—and especially those of Aquitaine, of whom Eleanor was the duchess—were desirous of independence. By the people, we of course only mean those who had wealth and power. To the villeins and the slaves it was of little consequence who governed them. To the young rebellious princes it appeared, as it has appeared to historians, that the struggle for inheritance was a mere personal question. Richard used to say that it was the birthright of their race to be at variance. But there was something more than this curse fated to rest upon the line of Plantagenet, as the old chroniclers believed. The power which the second Henry had acquired was too enormous to be long upheld. It would have fallen to pieces at once in the hands of a weak king. It was broken up, in less than a quarter of a century after his death, when a king came who was neither a warrior nor a statesman. To avert the severance of his vast dominions, Henry had need of all his great qualities. Louis of France bound himself, with the usual oaths, to aid the young Henry in his attempt to possess England; and the young Henry vowed never to make peace with his father unless France should give consent. There were two other princes who became parties to this league—William, king of Scotland, and Philip, count of Flanders. In England there were discontented barons, whose oppressions were checked by a sovereign who had strenuously asserted the very disagreeable principle of legal justice.

Henry collected an army of twenty thousand adventurers, soldiers of fortune, who were ready to support any cause that afforded pay and plunder. The allied enemies of the king entered Normandy, but they were repulsed.

The Scots made incursions upon the north of England, but they were driven back by Richard de Lacy, the justiciar, and Humphrey de Bohun, the lord constable, who ravaged Lothian and burned Berwick. Meanwhile, the earl of Leicester, who had taken part against the king, had brought over a large body of Flemings; and the force was joined by the earl of Norfolk, at Framlingham castle. Near Bury St. Edmunds they were met by the army which had returned triumphantly from Scotland. The banner of St. Edmund was

carried in front of the royal army; and, at a marshy place called Fornham, on the bank of the river, the rebel forces were entirely defeated, and the earl of Leicester and his countess were taken prisoners. The rebellious barons being thus defeated, many captives were sent to Henry in Normandy. In 1174 the rebellion became even more formidable. The Scots again entered England in great force. The insurrectionary standard was raised in the northern, the midland, and the eastern counties.

A fleet was ready at Gravelines to bring over the young Henry. But there was one who, whilst all around him seemed to be crumbling into ruin, stood as unshaken as in the days of his most joyous security. On the 8th of July the king took ship and crossed the Channel in a heavy storm. He was more than usually solemn during the long and difficult passage. His ordinary gaiety of heart was overclouded by deep thought. The man who had fallen dead at the shrine of St. Bennet at Canterbury was now a canonised saint, at whose tomb miracles were wrought which noble and churl equally believed. On the 10th of July Henry rode from Southampton during the night, and as he saw the cathedral towers of Canterbury looming in the gray dawn, he alighted, and walked in penitential garb barefoot to the city. He knelt at the tomb of Becket in deep humiliation. The bishop of London preached, and maintained that Henry had thus appealed to heaven in avowal of his innocence of the guilt of blood. Then the great king, before the assembled monks and chapter, poured forth his contrition for the passionate exclamation which had been so rashly interpreted; and he was scourged with a knotted cord. He spent the night in the dark crypt, and the next day rode fasting to London. There he fell ill. But on the fifth night of his fever a messenger came from Ranulf de Glanville. "Is Glanville well?" said the king. "He is well, and has now in his custody your enemy, the king of the Scots."

On the morning when Henry was humiliating himself before the tomb of Becket, the Norman barons in the interest of the English king had ridden from Newcastle to Alnwick, and there surprised the king of Scotland, tilting in a meadow with sixty companions. He bravely set lance in rest to meet assailants who were in earnest; but at the first encounter his horse was killed, and he became a captive. The Scottish lords threw down their arms, and a long train of English knights and their prisoners marched the same evening into Newcastle. The insurrection was at an end in England. The army which Henry had sent to oppose the rebel lords was now turned against his rebel sons and Louis of France. In another month Henry had scattered or terrified all his enemies, and at the end of September there was peace.

The king of Scotland was confined for several months in the castle of Falaise. A deputation of Scottish nobles and prelates assembled in Normandy to advise their king; and he was finally liberated, after doing homage to Henry as liege lord, it being stipulated that the Scottish clergy and barons should also take an oath of fealty to the English king, and that certain castles in Scotland should be garrisoned by English. This treaty was ratified at York in the succeeding year. Sir Walter Scott[t] terms this acknowledgment of the king of England as lord paramount of the whole kingdom of Scotland—homage never before having been claimed except for Lothian—"a miserable example of that impatience which too often characterised the Scottish counsels." It was some time before Henry would receive the reconciling homage of his eldest son; but in 1175 they sailed to England in company, and lived in apparent cordiality together.

Relieved of these pressing anxieties, the king again directed his mind to the better administration of his English dominions. In 1176, at a council at

Northampton, he divided the kingdom into six districts, each having three itinerant justices. The circuits of modern times do not greatly vary from these ancient divisions. It has been imputed to Henry, by Lingard,[d] that he established these courts of assize chiefly to bring money into his own exchequer. That the revenues of the crown would be increased by the power which these justices possessed of inquiring into wardships, lapsed lands, fines received from defaulters, and other matters connected with sovereign rights, cannot be doubted. The pleas of the crown and of the forest afforded royal profit. The common pleas between subject and subject were also a source of pecuniary advantage to the treasury. But that the king and his chief justiciary were desirous to judge righteously, and to compel others so to judge, we have some evidence. Peter of Blois,[f] who always writes to the king with honest freedom, in one of his letters says: "If causes are tried in your highness's presence, or before your chief justice, there is no place for bribery or favour; all goes on equitably, and your sentences do not exceed, in the least degree, the bounds of moderation. But if a poor man's cause goes to the petty judges, the wicked is justified for his gifts, snares are laid for the poor, quibbles on syllables are practised, and word-catching." In the same letter he says: "Your justices in eyre, who are sent to check other men's faults, have a great many of their own. They hide men's crimes, from favour, or fear, or relationship, or for money." Henry did not allow these practices to remain unchecked. In three years after their appointment he removed all the justices in eyre, except Ranulf de Glanville, who, with five others, held assizes north of the Trent. He was subsequently appointed chief justiciar.

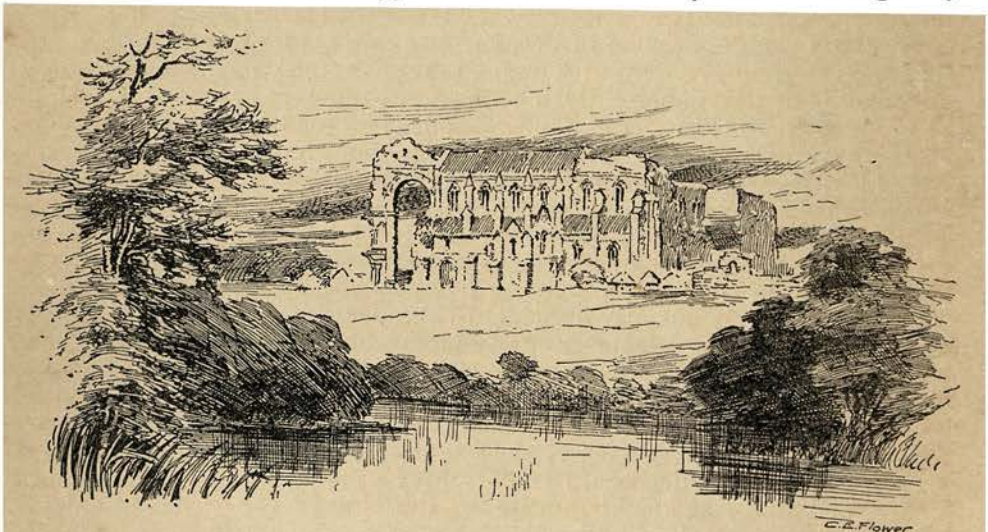
During the peace which Henry enjoyed for eight years after the suppression of the revolts of 1174, he devoted himself to the unremitting discharge of his civil duties. That tranquillity was not disturbed till 1183. In that year the unquiet Plantagenet blood was again asserting "the birthright of their race to be at variance." Henry, the eldest son, had been the foremost in every tournament; and Richard and Geoffrey were equally emulous of the fame of accomplished knights. In 1183 the king commanded Richard to do homage to his elder brother for Aquitaine. He refused, and Henry entered Richard's territory with an army. The father interposed, and apparently reconciled the sons. But new causes of quarrel arose; and then Henry and Geoffrey rebelled against the king. Into these quarrels, as obscure in their details as they are hateful in their principle, we have no desire to enter. Being about to give battle to his father, the young Henry fell ill, and then he became penitent. The king, always forgiving, sent him a ring as a token of his love, and the unhappy man died pressing that token to his lips. Geoffrey was pardoned; but he then made new demands, and repaired to the court of Philip, now king of France, to excite new troubles. In 1186 he was thrown from his horse at a tournament, and died in a few days. Richard and John only remained, to show "how sharper than a serpent's tooth" is filial ingratitude.

THE LAST YEARS OF HENRY II

Louis of France died in 1180, and Henry of England was then released from their mutual obligation to visit the Holy Land. In England there were two powerful bodies especially sworn as defenders of the cross—the knights Hospitallers and the Knights Templars. In 1185, during a suspension of hostilities with Saladin, the patriarch of Jerusalem, Heraclius, arrived in England; and the church of the new house of the Templars in London was

consecrated by him. In those quiet courts, now so changed, but looking out upon the same broad river, dwelt the prior, the knights, and the serving brethren of the great order of the Templars. In that round church, which in late years has been restored to its primitive beauty, the chaplains of the community prayed for the fall of the infidel; and the knights who had fought against him were buried with monumental honour—as they were in other churches—distinguished by that singular attitude of the crossed legs, which denoted that the Holy Land had witnessed the performance of their sacred vows.

Heraclius had a special mission in England. It was to urge King Henry, as the representative of Fulk of Anjou, whose descendants had been kings of Jerusalem for half a century, to rescue the sacred city from the dangers by



MALMESBURY ABBEY
(Twelfth century)

which she was threatened. Henry referred the question to his great council —whether he should go to the East, for the defence of Palestine, or remain to govern the nations of which heaven had given him the charge. The council decided wisely. The king remained: but he promised a large sum to assist those who were engaged in the sacred warfare. In 1187 Jerusalem was surrendered to Saladin. Then went forth deep lamentation throughout Europe. A pope died of grief. A king wore sackcloth. Other sovereigns trembled for the safety of their own possessions, under a possible invasion of the triumphant Mussulmans. In 1188 Henry proceeded to France, and he and Philip Augustus resolved to take the cross. He returned to England, and obtained an enormous tribute, of which nearly one-half was extorted from the Jews.

Henry was bent upon a new field of enterprise. He was yet vigorous, though past the prime of life. But a suspicious friendship had arisen between Philip and Henry's son, Richard. The real causes of the troubles that ensued are not very manifest; but the disputes ended in Richard joining the French king in a war against his father. The projected crusade was necessarily suspended. Philip and Richard took his castles, whilst Henry remained

[1188-1189 A.D.]

in a condition of unusual supineness. He was now broken in spirit. He met the king of France in a plain near Tours, during a violent thunder-storm. His agitation was great. In his weakened health he yielded, almost without a struggle, to the demands which were made upon him. They were exorbitant, and put that proud heart wholly under subjection to the will of Philip and that of his rebellious son Richard. Throughout these unnatural conflicts he had rested his hopes upon his beloved John, to whom he had required his seneschal to deliver his castles in the event of his death, and who he had hoped might possess Normandy. On a sick-bed he signed the treaty. He had asked for the names of those barons who had joined the French king. The first name he saw was John. He read no more. The world and all its troubles and hopes faded from his view. He turned his face to the wall, and exclaimed, "Let everything go as it will." He was then carried in a litter to his pleasant palace of Chinon, and there laid himself down to die. One only watched over him with real affection—his illegitimate son, Geoffrey. His great heart was broken. On the 6th of July, 1189, Henry II was no more.[a]

Besides his five legitimate sons, of whom three preceded him to the grave, Henry had three daughters by his wife Eleanor. Matilda, the eldest, was married to Henry, duke of Saxony, Bavaria, Westphalia, etc.; and from her is descended the present royal family of Great Britain. Eleanor, the second daughter, was married to Alfonso the Good, king of Castile; and Joan, the youngest, was united to William II, king of Sicily, a prince of the Norman line of Guiscard. Two of his natural children have obtained the general notice of history on account of the celebrity of their mother, Rosamond, and of their own eminent qualities. The first, who was born while Stephen was yet on the throne of England, was William, surnamed Longsword, who married the heiress of the earl of Salisbury, and succeeded to the high titles and immense estates of that baron; the second was the still better known Geoffrey,[1] who was born about the time when Henry became king, and who was made bishop of Lincoln at a very early age. He had much of Henry's spirit and ability, and, if an indifferent prelate, he was a bold and successful warrior in his *nonage*, when (during the first insurrection promoted by his father's legitimate sons) he gained in the north some signal advantages for the king, to whom he and his brother, William Longsword, were ever faithful and affectionate. Geoffrey was subsequently made chancellor, when, like Becket in the same capacity, he constantly accompanied the king. In his dying moments Henry expressed a hope or a wish that he might be made archbishop of York, a promotion which he afterwards obtained.

THE STORY OF FAIR ROSAMOND

The history of their mother, the "Fair Rosamond," has been enveloped in romantic traditions which have scarcely any foundation in truth, but which have taken so firm a hold on the popular mind, and have been identified with so much poetry, that it is neither an easy nor a pleasant task to dissipate the fanciful illusion, and unpeople the "bower" in the sylvan shades of Woodstock. Rosamond de Clifford was the daughter of a baron of Herefordshire,

[[1] Geoffrey was certainly not, as here stated, a son of "Fair Rosamond" Clifford. His mother was probably an English woman, but otherwise nothing is known of her. His age makes it certain that Rosamond could not have been his mother. Norgate[b] says he must have been born before Henry's accession—probably between 1151-1153. Henry, it must be remembered, had a legitimate son of the same name who died in 1186.]

the beautiful site of whose antique castle, in the valley of the Wye, is pointed out to the traveller between the town of the Welsh Hay and the city of Hereford, at a point where the most romantic of rivers, after foaming through its rocky, narrow bed in Wales, sweeps freely and tranquilly through an open English valley of surpassing loveliness. Henry became enamoured of her in his youth, before he was king, and the connection continued for many years; but long before his death, and even long before his quarrel with his wife and legitimate sons (with which, it appears, she had nothing to do), Rosamond retired, to lead a religious and penitent life, into the "little nunnery" of Godestow, in the "rich meadows of Evenlod near unto Oxford."

As Henry still preserved gentle and generous feelings towards the object of his youthful passion, he made many donations to the "little nunnery" on her account; and when she died (some time, at least, before the first rebellion) the nuns, in gratitude to one who had been both directly and indirectly their benefactress, buried her in their choir, hung a silken pall over her tomb, and kept tapers constantly burning around it. These few lines, we believe, comprise all that is really known of the Fair Rosamond. The legend, so familiar to the childhood of all of us, was of later and gradual growth, not being the product of one imagination. The chronicler Brompton,[s] who wrote in the time of Edward III, or more than a century and a half after the event, gave the first description we possess of the secret bower of Rosamond. He says that, in order that she might not be "easily taken unawares by the queen," Henry constructed, near "Wodestoke," a bower for this "most sightly maiden," of wonderful contrivance, and not unlike the Dædalean labyrinth; but he speaks only of a device against surprise, and intimates, in clear terms, that Rosamond died a natural death. The clue of silk, and the poison-bowl forced on her fair and gentle rival by the jealous and revengeful Eleanor, were additions of a still more modern date.

The adventures of the amiable frail one's unoffending bones are better authenticated. A rigid bishop caused them to be cast out of the church and interred in the common cemetery, observing to the nuns that the tomb of a harlot was no fit object for a choir of virgins to contemplate, and that religion made no distinction between the mistress of a king and the mistress of any other man. But gratitude rebelled against this salutary doctrine, and the virgin sisterhood of Godestow gathered up the remains, perfumed the dry bones, laid them again in their church, under a fair, large gravestone, and set up a cross hard by, with an inscription imploring requiem or rest for Rosamond.[c]

THE CHARACTER OF HENRY II

If we seek the character of the founder of the Common Law in the pages of the justiciar (Glanville[o]), we shall view him as greater and more powerful than any king who had hitherto borne sway in England—just, discreet, and merciful; a lover of peace, but whose humanity did not degenerate into indolence or supineness; mighty, but who never allowed his strength to tempt him into tyranny. By the force of his right hand he crushed the violence of the proud and intractable, while he extended his sceptre to the indigent and lowly. None of the judges of his court could dare to deviate, however slightly, from the path of righteousness, nor to utter a sentence contrary to the dictates of truth. In his supreme tribunal, the power of the adversary oppressed not the poor man; neither could favor or credit drive the lowly from the

[1189 A.D.]

seat of judgment. Such are the sentences which preface the earliest treatise on the Law.

But in the portrait which we receive from the ecclesiastic Ralph Niger,[p] who on account of his support of Becket was exiled by Henry, every virtue disappears: unchaste, greedy, avaricious, capricious, and cruel, he abolished all the old and rightful laws of the country, by the new ordinances termed "assizes," which he promulgated every year. Severe beyond example, his jurisprudence was subversive both of natural justice and of the laudable customs of the realm. Attacking, with an even hand, the honour, the privileges, and the property of the aristocracy, and the franchises of the clergy, no individual was so exalted as to be above the reach of his arbitrary power; no one so insignificant as to be sheltered by obscurity from his searching tyranny. This strange discrepancy between the minister and the monk may be attributed in part to the difference of their respective stations. The persecutor of Becket could find little favour from the churchman; and the charge preferred against him that "he kept the guilty priest in fetters, making no distinction between the clerk and the churl," may not be considered as a proof of the impartiality of the complainant; but the fiscal extortions of Henry, together with the abuses resulting from the sale of right and justice, have been faithfully recorded. In opposition to the praises of his equity, so loudly bestowed by Glanville, we can quote the declaration of the suitor, who counts the bribes which he paid to the monarch; and the testimony afforded by the justiciar is rendered suspicious by his known perversion of the law to answer his own sinister designs.[n]

Peter of Blois' Description of Henry II

You are aware that his complexion and hair were a little red, but the approach of old age has altered this somewhat and the hair is turning gray. He is of middle size, such that among short men he seems tall, and even among tall ones not the least in stature. His head is spherical, as if it were the seat of great wisdom and the special sanctuary of deep schemes. In size it is such as to correspond well with the neck and whole body. His eyes are round and, while he is calm, dove-like and quiet; but when he is angry, they flash fire and are like lightning. His hair is not grown scant, but he keeps it well cut. His face is lion-like, and almost square. His nose projects in a degree proportionate to the symmetry of his whole body. His feet are arched; his shins like a horse's; his broad chest and brawny arms proclaim him to be strong, active, and bold. In one of his toes, however, part of the nail grows into the flesh, and increases enormously, to the injury of the whole foot. His hands by their coarseness show the man's carelessness; he wholly neglects all attention to them, and never puts a glove on, except he is hawking.

He every day attends mass, councils, and other public business, and stands on his feet from morning till night. Though his shins are terribly wounded and discoloured by constant kicks from horses, he never sits down except on horseback or when he is eating. In one day, if need requires, he will perform four or five regular days' journeys, and by these rapid and unexpected movements often defeats his enemies' plans. He uses straight boots, a plain hat, and a tight dress. He is very fond of field sports, and if he is not fighting, amuses himself with hawking and hunting. He would have grown enormously fat if he did not tame this tendency to belly by fasting and exercise. In mounting a horse and riding he preserves all the light-

ness of youth, and tires out the strongest men by his excursions almost every day. For he does not, like other kings, lie idle in his palace, but goes through his provinces examining into everyone's conduct, and particularly that of the persons whom he has appointed judges of others. No one is shrewder in council, readier in speaking, more self-possessed in danger, more careful in prosperity, more firm in adversity. If he once forms an attachment to a man he seldom gives him up; if he has once taken a real aversion to a person, he seldom admits him afterwards to any familiarity. He has forever in his hands bows, swords, hunting-nets, and arrows, except he is at council or at his books; for as often as he can get breathing time from his cares and anxieties he occupies himself with private reading, or, surrounded by a knot of clergymen, he endeavours to solve some hard question. The constant con-

WARKWORTH CASTLE, NORTHUMBERLAND
(From the twelfth to the fourteenth century)

versation of learned men and the discussion of questions make his court a daily school.

No one can be more dignified in speaking, more cautious at table, more moderate in drinking, more splendid in gifts, more generous in arms. He is pacific in heart, victorious in war, but glorious in peace, which he desires for his people as the most precious of earthly gifts. It is with a view to this that he receives, collects, and dispenses such an immensity of money. He is equally skilful and liberal in erecting walls, towers, fortifications, moats, and places of enclosure for fish and birds. No one is more gentle to the distressed, more affable to the poor, more overbearing to the proud. It has always, indeed, been his study, by a certain carriage of himself like a deity, to put down the insolent, to encourage the oppressed, and to repress the swellings of pride by continual and deadly persecution. Although, by the customs of the kingdom, he has the chief and most influential part in elections (of bishops?), his hands have always been pure from anything like venality. But these and other excellent gifts of mind and body with which nature has enriched him I can but briefly touch. I profess my own incompetence to describe them, and believe that Cicero or Virgil would labour in vain.

I often wonder how one who has been used to the service of scholarship and the camps of learning can endure the annoyances of a court life. Among

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courtiers there is no order, no plan, no moderation, either in food, in horse exercises, or in watchings. A priest or a soldier attached to the court has bread put before him which is not kneaded, nor leavened, made of the dregs of beer—bread like lead, full of bran, and unbaked; wine, spoiled either by being sour or mouldy—thick, greasy, rancid, tasting of pitch, and vapid. I have sometimes seen wine so full of dregs put before noblemen that they were compelled rather to filter than drink it, with their eyes shut and their teeth closed, with loathing and retching. The beer at court is horrid to taste and filthy to look at. On account of the great demand, meat, whether sweet or not, is sold alike; the fish is four days old, yet its stinking does not lessen its price. The servants care nothing whatever whether the unlucky guests are sick or dead, provided there are fuller dishes sent up to their master's tables. Indeed, the tables are filled (sometimes) with carrion, and the guests' stomachs thus become the tombs for those who die in the course of nature. Indeed, many more deaths would ensue from this putrid food were it not that the famishing greediness of the stomach (which, like a whirlpool, will suck in anything), by the help of powerful exercise, gets rid of everything. But if the courtiers cannot have exercise (which is the case if the court stays for a time in a town), some of them always stay behind at the point of death.

This too must be added to the miseries of court: If the king announces his intention of moving three days hence, and particularly if the royal pleasure has been announced by the heralds, you may be quite sure that the king will start by daybreak, and put everybody's plans to the rout by his unexpected despatch. Thus it frequently happens that persons who have been let blood, or have taken physic, follow the king without regard to themselves, place their existence at the hazard of a die, and, for fear of losing what they neither do nor ever will possess, are not afraid of losing their own lives. You may see men running about like madmen, sumpter-horses pressing on sumpter-horses, and carriages jostling against carriages, all, in short, in utter confusion. So that, from the thorough disturbance and misery, one might get a good description of the look of hell. But if his majesty has given notice beforehand that he will move to such a place very early the next day, his plan will certainly be changed, and you may therefore be sure that he will sleep till mid-day. You will see the sumpter-horses waiting with their burdens on, the carriages all quiet, the pioneers asleep, the court purveyors in a worry, and all muttering to one another; then they run to the prostitutes and the court shopkeepers to inquire of them whether the prince will go, for this class of court followers very often know the secrets of the palace.

The king's court, indeed, is regularly followed by stage-players, washer-women, dice-players, confectioners, tavern-keepers, buffoons, barbers, pick-pockets—in short, the whole race of this kind. I have often known that, when the king was asleep and everything in deep silence, a message came from the royal quarters (not omnipotent, perhaps, but still awaking all), and told us the city or town to which we were to go. After we had been worn out with expectation, it was some comfort at all events that we were to be fixed where we might hope to find plenty of lodgings and provisions. There was then such a hurried and confused rush of horse and foot immediately that you would think all hell had broken loose. However, when the pioneers had quite or nearly finished their day's journey, the king would change his mind, and go to some other place, where, perhaps, he had the only house and a plenty of provisions, none of which were given to anyone else. And, if I dare say so, I really think that his pleasure was increased by our

annoyance. We had to travel three or four miles through unknown woods, and often in the dark, and thought ourselves too happy if at length we could find a dirty and miserable hut. There was often a violent quarrel among the courtiers about the cottages, and they would fight with swords about a place for which pigs would have been ashamed to quarrel.

By exceeding complaisance you may sometimes keep in favour with the outer porters for two days, but this will not last to a third, unless you buy it with continued gifts and flattery. They will tell the most unblushing falsehoods, and say that the king is ill, or asleep, or at council. And if you are an honest and religious man, but have given them nothing the day before, they will keep you an unreasonable time standing in the rain and mire; and to annoy you the more, and move your bile, they will allow a set of hair-dressers and thieves to go in at the first word. As to the door-keepers of the presence, may the Most High confound them! For they are not afraid to put every good man to the blush, and cover him with confusion. Have you got by the terrible porters without? It is of no avail, unless you have bribed the door-keeper! After the first Cerberus, there is another worse than Cerberus, more terrible than Briareus, more wicked than Pygmalion, and more cruel than the Minotaur. If you were in the greatest danger of losing your life, or your fortune, to the king you cannot go; nay, it often happens, to make things ten thousand times worse, that while you are kept out these wretches let your enemy in. O Lord Jesus Christ, if this is the way of living, if this is the life of the court, may I never go back to it again! I cannot attempt to reckon the grievous loss of time which I have already sustained in years of trifling about the court.[f]

LEGISLATION OF HENRY II

No time is richer than this in legal history. The whole reign of Henry II was a reign of legislation, and the work was not interrupted even during the time of the great struggle with the archbishop. In the year before the promotion of Thomas to the primacy, king and chancellor had dealt one direct blow at all feudal ideas. In the war of Toulouse the scutage was first devised; a money payment was accepted instead of personal military service. The money was of course spent in hiring mercenaries; and it was largely by the help of mercenaries that Henry subdued his rebels in England. But later in his reign, by the Assize of Arms (1181), he regulated the old constitutional force of the country, and enjoined that every free Englishman should be ready to serve with the weapons belonging to his rank.

Other incidental notices show us that much legislation was done while Henry still had Thomas for his minister. The reign of Henry is rich in charters to boroughs, several of which are early enough in his reign to bear the signature of Chancellor Thomas. And a reference in the Constitutions of Clarendon shows that, thus early in his reign, Henry had begun that great step towards the development of jury trial which is one of the special marks of his reign. By the work of Henry and his chancellor the system of recognition was organised, by which sworn men gave a verdict, but as yet a verdict given from their own knowledge. The great legal writer of Henry's reign, the justiciar Glanville,[o] speaks of the recognition as a special gift of Henry to his people, and enlarges on its superiority to the wager of battle. All this comes within the chancellorship of Thomas; and we shall do the chancellor great injustice if we think wholly of his later ecclesiastical character and

forget his services in the days when he was the chief minister of one of our greatest kings. Of the extant ordinances of Henry's reign, the oldest after the charter issued at his coronation are the Constitutions of Clarendon themselves (1164). The Assize of Clarendon—a wholly distinct document (1166)—and the Inquest of Sheriffs (1170) came during the time of the quarrel with Thomas.

On these, after the death of Thomas, follow in 1176 the Assize of Northampton, in 1181 the Assize of Arms, and in 1184 the Assize of the Forest. All these bear witness to Henry's care, even when he was most occupied with other matters, to preserve the peace of the land, and to enable all his subjects to have justice done to them in the king's name. And in all, the mode of inquisition by the oath of twelve lawful men grows at each step. The Assizes of Clarendon and Northampton have a special reference to one of Henry's great measures, that by which the visitation of the country by itinerant judges going regular circuits was finally established. It was not an invention of his own; the visits of the king's judges had begun to take a regular shape under Henry I. But it was Henry II who organised the whole system afresh after the anarchy. It was he who finally established the specially English principle that justice should be administered in different parts of the kingdom by judges not belonging to the particular district, but immediately commissioned by the king. When the king's judges came and received the inquisitions of the local jurors, though the complete modern ideal of a judge and jury had not been reached, yet something had been reached which could grow into that ideal without any one moment of change so great as the changes wrought by Henry himself. By him the jury was applied to all manner of purposes.

The Assize of Arms was distinctly a return to the old military system. It gave a new life to the *fyrd*, the ancient militia, which had never gone out of use, but which had been overshadowed by feudal levies on the one hand and by the use of mercenaries on the other. Each man was to have the arms which befitted the amount of his property. It was by a jury that the liability of each man to be ranked in such or such a class was to be fixed. Even in the Assize of the Forest, an ordinance framed to protect the most exceptional and most oppressive of all the royal rights, the popular element comes in. Sworn knights are appointed in each shire to protect those rights. Lastly, when in 1188 the tithe[1] was levied for the defence of eastern Christendom against Saladin, the liability of each man to the impost was assessed by a local jury. In all these ways the appeal to the oath of lawful men, as opposed to any other form of finding out truth, was strengthened by every step in the legislation of Henry.

Meanwhile the administrative system which had been growing up ever since the Conquest took firm root under Henry. We have a contemporary picture of it, drawn by one of Henry's own officials, in the *Dialogus de Scaccario*.[r] This was the work of Richard, treasurer of the exchequer and bishop of London, one of the family of officials founded by Roger of Salisbury. Alongside of this, we have our first strictly legal treatise, as distinguished from private compilations and codes, in the work of the great justiciar Glanville.[o]

[1 The real importance of the ordinance by which the "Saladin tithe" was instituted consists in its being the earliest attempt to impose a tax on personal property, and in the employment of local jurors to determine the responsibility of the individual. In this latter aspect it shows a striking difference from the corresponding act of Philip Augustus, which may well be said to point the difference in the existing political systems of England and France. The ordinance of Henry II showed a development of the representative theory; that of Philip Augustus rested on the feudal basis.]

In short, we may say that under Henry the legal system of England took a shape which it has practically kept ever since. The endless changes of the last seven hundred years are rather special amendments of Henry's work than anything which can be said to start altogether afresh from a new point. Strictly constitutional advance rather belongs to the reigns of Henry's sons than to that of Henry himself. Nor is this wonderful. Constitutional advance commonly means the lessening of the royal power, and acts which lessen the royal power do not often issue from the free will of kings. In Henry's time, above all, a time when law and order had to be restored after the reign of anarchy, the momentary need was rather to strengthen the royal power than to lessen it. Legal reforms are often, as in this case, the free gift of wise kings; constitutional reforms have commonly to be wrested from weak or wicked kings. But the legal reforms of Henry supplied an element which largely entered into the constitutional reforms of the next stage. Out of Henry's favourite institution of recognitions on oath grew not only trial by jury but also the House of Commons.

By the time of Henry II the force of circumstances, especially the working of the practice of summons, had gradually changed the ancient assembly of the whole nation into a mere gathering of the great men of the realm. The work which had now to be done, and which, in the space of about a hundred years, was gradually done by a number of instruments, conscious and unconscious, was to call into being a second and more popular assembly alongside of the assembly which had lost its popular character. To use language which belongs to a somewhat later time than that with which we are now dealing, the House of Lords already existed; the House of Commons had to be called into being alongside of it. The details of this great process of constitutional growth must be drawn out by the strictly constitutional historian. All that can be done here is to call attention to the main lines of the process and to its more remarkable landmarks. And it may be well from the very beginning to give the warning that the two houses of the English parliament did not arise out of any theoretical preference for two houses over one or three. The number was fixed, like everything else in English history, by what we are apt to call circumstances or accidents. The whole English parliamentary system was eminently one which was not made, but grew. Thus, for instance, it was only gradually established that the barons should be personally summoned to the same house as the bishops and earls, while the knights should appear only by their representatives along with the smaller freeholders and the burgesses of the towns.[l]

SOCIAL LIFE UNDER THE NORMAN AND ANGEVIN KINGS

The conquest of England by the Normans was an event scarcely to be deplored. The Saxon occupation of the country had now lasted six hundred years; but the rate of national progress had been so slow, and at the time of the Conquest itself appeared to be so decisively arrested, that any impulse, however rude and severe, would have been preferable to such a stagnation. For this want of improvement, also, such causes were in operation as to make any other kind of remedy hopeless.

As might be expected, the first progress of the Normans after their conquest of England was slow, and from the same causes which had retarded that of the Saxons. Although superior to the conquered in refinement, they were still rude and illiterate; and as they were the smaller party, the utmost of their

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efforts for a long time were tasked first to win, and afterwards to retain their ascendancy. The arts of war, therefore, rather than those of peace, occupied their immediate attention, and the march of civilisation, instead of being accelerated, was in the first instance rather retarded by the change. But the shock was soon surmounted, and a foundation laid for future improvement during the course of the present period. William the Conqueror himself was a lover and patron of learning; Henry Beauclerc, his son, was distinguished for his scholarship; and Henry II was not only accomplished in the learning of the period, but his sons also were distinguished for their literary acquirements.

It is likewise to be noted that, although one of the earliest oppressions of the Conquest was the deposition of the English ecclesiastical dignitaries, yet their loss was little to be regretted on the score of learning, while their places were filled by foreign prelates of a much superior description. Of these, Lanfranc and Anselm were subtle metaphysicians and theologians; while Geoffrey, who established a school at Dunstable, and Godfrey, prior of St. Swithin's, were excellent Latin poets. Abbeys were also founded and libraries established for the promotion of literature and the extension of education; while schools in connection with cathedrals and monasteries were multiplied over the kingdom. It was chiefly, however, the clergy who availed themselves of these opportunities, for as yet, even of the Norman nobility, there were few who could either read or write. But, indeed, the education delivered at these seminaries was scarcely attractive enough for the stirring spirits of the young men of the day, being chiefly of a theological and scholastic character, mixed up, as might be supposed, with a full amount of the mere pedantry and show of scholarship. Such we learn from the description of Fitzstephen.[u]

"On holidays," he thus writes, "it is usual for these schools to hold public meetings in the churches, in which the scholars engage in demonstrative or logical disputations; some using enthymemes, and others perfect syllogisms; some aiming at nothing but to gain the victory and make an ostentatious display of their acuteness, while others have the investigation of truth in view. Artful sophists on these occasions acquire great applause, some by a prodigious inundation and flow of words, others by their specious but fallacious arguments. After the disputations, other scholars deliver rhetorical declamations, in which they observe all the rules of art, and neglect no topic of persuasion. Even the younger boys in the different schools contend against each other in verse about the principles of grammar and the preterites and supines of verbs." Thus early had that course of education been in full vigour in England, which continued for centuries and as long as the Aristotelian system prevailed. But the seminary which was finally to surpass and eclipse all these institutions is thus described by Peter of Blois,[t] a lively writer who flourished in the reign of Henry II:

"In the year 1109, Joffrid, abbot of Croyland, sent to his manor of Cottenham, near Cambridge, Master Gislebert [Gilbert], his fellow-monk, and professor of theology, with three other monks who had followed him into England, who, being very well instructed in philosophical theorems and other primitive sciences, went every day to Cambridge, and, having hired a certain public barn, taught the sciences openly, and in a little time collected a great concourse of scholars; for, in the very second year after their arrival, the number of their scholars from the town and country increased so much, that there was no house, barn, nor church capable of containing them. For this reason they separated into different parts of the town, and imitating the plan of the Studium of Orleans, brother Odo, who was eminent as a grammarian and

satirical poet, read grammar according to the doctrine of Priscian, and of his commentator Remegius, to the boys and younger students that were assigned to him, early in the morning. At one o'clock, brother Terricus, a most acute sophist, read the logic of Aristotle according to the introductions and commentaries of Porphyry and Averrhoës, to those who were further advanced. At three, brother William read lectures on Tully's rhetoric and Quintilian's *Institutions*. But Master Gislebert, being ignorant of the English, but very expert in the Latin and French languages, preached in the several churches to the people on Sundays and holidays. From this little fountain which hath swelled into a great river, we now behold the city of God made glad, and all England rendered fruitful by many teachers and doctors issuing from Cambridge, after the likeness of the holy paradise."

It will be noticed here that in such a concourse of learned men from different countries, Latin was the conventional language, which was spoken with the ease and fluency of a living tongue. But to preach in it before illiterate rustic audiences, as Master Gilbert appears to have done! The people, however, were probably charmed with the sound, and only the more convinced by how little they could comprehend. Such phenomena are not rare in preaching. In this way, Giraldus Cambrensis roused the people of Wales to arms, while preaching a crusade in 1186 for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. He harangued them in Latin, of which they did not understand a word; but they wept, and hurried forward in crowds to enrol themselves for the war in Palestine.

The Growth of Towns

We now turn our eyes to the general condition of society both in town and country. Already, not only "the sweet security of streets" was felt doubly needful in the new state of things, but also that spirit of centralisation had vigorously commenced which gives birth to national industry, wealth, and civilisation. Thus, Bristol, Exeter, Winchester, Gloucester, and Chester were already populous towns, to which may be added Dunwich, Lynn, Lincoln, and Norwich; and all of them were distinguished either for home or foreign trade, especially the latter, which was carried on with Ireland and the Continent. In like manner, the towns along the coast of England in general, which afterwards rose into opulence, were coming into note through their shipping and commercial enterprise. But already the court and the Thames had imparted to London that pre-eminence which it still so immeasurably holds over every other English city; and the Latin style of Fitzstephen[u] scarcely furnishes him with words of sufficient bulk and weight to describe its magnificence. It contained forty thousand inhabitants! In the city and suburbs were 126 parochial churches and thirteen large conventual ones, while Ludgate was the extreme west end of the city. The inhabitants, too, were reckoned something better than mere ordinary citizens, just as the citizens of Rome in ancient times became the patricians of the overgrown republic.

Its traffic was carried on with every country, but chiefly with Germany; and the provisions that were garnered within its granaries were the chief resource of the surrounding districts during the occasional visits of famine. A trade so brisk and so extensive, he adds, was also properly systematised, so that not only the merchants of every commodity, but the workmen of every craft had their respective places assigned to them. London also was curiously bounded, according to the ideas of the nineteenth century. The city was girdled with a great and high wall, having seven gates which were made double; and on the north and south it had towers and turrets at intervals; but on the

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south side the wall was worn out and washed away by the ebb and flow of the Thames. Such was the fate of the riverside fortifications in the time of Fitz-stephen, and about the same period the stone bridge of London arose in their place, thus connecting both sides of the Thames, which had formerly been wedged asunder. Ludgate, as we have already mentioned, was the west end of London: the space between it and Westminster was a tract of fields and gardens. Smithfield, as yet a suburban locality, was then, as till lately, a cattle market, in which horses, cows, hogs, and other animals were sold. Moor-fields was a large lake, formed by the confluence of several streams that turned mills. That great artery of London now called the City road, with its countless ramifications of streets, consisted at that time of pasturage and corn-fields; while beyond that rural territory now known as Islington and Pentonville, a large tract of forest extended, stored with wild boars and other game, where the citizens enjoyed the recreation of hunting. Thus much for London, which even at that period was the marvel of foreigners on account of its greatness and its wealth. Well might the German barons who accompanied Richard I exclaim, when they saw the magnificence of his reception within its walls: "O king! if our emperor had suspected this, you would not have been let off so lightly!"

The Jews and Flemings

While adverting to the mercantile character of the English towns, it is necessary to allude to those persons by whom the infant commerce and manufactures of the nation were at this period chiefly promoted. And first among the men of business we may mention the Jews, who even at this early period had perceived the facilities which England possessed for gainful traffic, and who flocked thither in great numbers. True to their national character, and the doom imposed upon them of having no abiding home or resting-place, they neither dealt in land nor bulky articles of merchandise, neither built, created, nor manufactured; on the contrary, they dealt in money, the light symbol and representative of these substantialities; and that they might be enabled to gird up their loins and flee at a moment's warning, without the risk and labour of carrying gold and silver along with them, they symbolised the symbol itself, by the use of bills of exchange and letters of credit, so that they could carry their whole fortune away in the shape of a few scraps of paper or parchment. The towns were the natural abodes of such men, and especially the capital, where they pursued the vocation of money-lenders, and drove a thriving trade, on account of the prodigality of the Norman nobles.

The law, too, was greatly in their favour, for while every Christian was prohibited from exacting any interest whatever upon a loan, the Jews were untouched by the statute, and might lay on their percentages to whatever amount they pleased. But although they were thus the brokers of the court, and money-lenders of royalty itself, their very profits made their situation more precarious than that of a farmer of taxes in the French revolution, or a Turkish pasha under the old régime; for like leeches they were compelled to disgorge as often as their tyrants were pleased to turn upon them; and in this way the English kings were able to draw into the royal treasury the money of the people, without the odium of collecting it. The histories of Richard I and John show how well these sovereigns understood such a simple and direct mode of finance. But this was not the worst which these outcasts of the world were compelled to endure; and the record of their sufferings during the crusading frenzy forms one of the most melancholy as well as atrocious episodes in the ancient chronicles of England.

It was fortunate that another class of people were already settled in the country, from whom its mercantile interests were to derive more substantial benefits than could ever be obtained from Jewish usurers. These were Flemish emigrants, who, in consequence of the bursting of their dikes, had been deprived of the territory which they had won from the sea, and were therefore obliged to seek a more permanent home. They first came to England in the time of the Conqueror, and as they were brave as well as industrious men they were located on the frontier of Wales, where they formed a sort of steady break-water against the stormy invasions of the Welsh. This colony was soon increased by fresh arrivals; and Henry II, perceiving the benefits to be derived from such a people, not only enlarged their territory, but endowed them with many political privileges. England had hitherto not been a manufacturing country, but the arrival of these Flemings introduced the preparation and weaving of wool, so that, in process of time, not only the home market was abundantly supplied with woollen cloth, but a large surplus made for foreign exportation.

Unlike the Jews, too, these Flemings, while they formed a gallant border defence against the Welsh, and diffused industrial arts and habits among the English, were not only Christians, but kinsmen of the Anglo-Saxon race, and distinguished for that probity in their commercial dealings which afterwards became the characteristic of the English merchants at large. From England, these Flemings gradually introduced themselves into Scotland, where David I protected them, and allowed them to be governed by their own laws and usages. In this way not only the Scottish manufactures originated, but the trade of Scotland with Flanders, which continued for centuries, and was of great utility to both countries.

Architecture

The taste of the Normans for magnificent buildings was well attested by the churches, palaces, and castles which they erected in every land where they obtained the predominance; and after the conquest of so rich a country as England, these architectural predilections had scope for full exercise. Accordingly, while the greater part of the principal cathedrals and abbeys of the kingdom owed their origin to this period, a style of architecture was introduced superior to any that had yet been attempted in England. This, indeed, was to be expected where Norman prelates bore rule, and where the resources of the nation were at their command for the realisation of their utmost wishes. But while monasteries and cathedrals were thus so largely multiplied, castles sprang up in still greater profusion. The style in which these edifices were erected, whether ecclesiastical, castellated, or domestic, was that prevalent at the time in Normandy; but it cannot in strictness be said to have been introduced into England at the Conquest, for Edward the Confessor, who had been brought up in the Norman court, had surrounded himself with Normans, and employed Norman architects on his buildings. It is expressly stated that he built the abbey church of Westminster in a "new style of architecture," and that many other churches were imitated from it.

The Norman style continued in use for about one hundred and thirty years —that is, until the time of Richard I, about the end of whose reign it passed into the early English style. It may be conveniently divided into three periods—the Early, from the Conquest to 1100; the Middle, from 1100 to about 1180; and the Transition, from about this time to the end of the century.

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These dates cannot be absolutely fixed, but are an approximation sufficiently near for general purposes. The Norman style is thus distinguished from the Saxon: in the Saxon the towers were lofty in proportion to their width, and were without buttresses or staircases; their masonry was peculiar, and their windows, when of more than one light, were divided by a rude baluster, supporting a long impost through the thickness of the wall. In the Norman the towers were lower in proportion—were strengthened with buttresses, and had in general staircases, either in projecting turrets or within the thickness of the wall; their masonry had not the peculiar framework or quoins, and their windows were divided by small shafts instead of balusters. The mouldings, too, in the Saxon are few and simple, while in the Norman they are so numerous and ornamental as to form an important characteristic of the style.

Of the domestic buildings of this period, as contradistinguished from the castellated, we have a few existing remains, which, though imperfect, can still enable us to trace their original arrangement. The usual ground plan of the house seems to have been a parallelogram, comprising merely a large room or hall, which occupied the entire height of the building, and two rooms at the end of the hall, the lower being the cellar, and the upper the *solar* or sleeping-room, which served also for a sitting-room, and was in fact the only private room in the house. To these a kitchen and other outhouses were attached; and in large houses there was a chapel. The king's houses at the time seem to have had no other accommodation. The hall served for the common living-room of the master and his dependants. At one end the floor was raised a little higher than the rest, and on this raised part, which was called the *dais*, was placed crossways the principal table of the hall, and in the body were the tables for the servants and inferior guests. The floor of the hall served also for their sleeping-place, the solar being reserved for the master and his family. The hall was frequently divided into three parts by rows of pillars and arches, like the nave and aisles of a church; between these pillars curtains were hung, and by this means the aisles were separated from the body of the hall, and the sleeping apartments rendered more private.

The hall was usually on the ground floor, but sometimes it was on the first floor; and in this case the lower story was vaulted, and the communication with the upper story was by an external staircase. It is probable that the hall was warmed by a fire in the middle of the floor, with an opening, or *louvre*, in the roof over it, to allow the escape of smoke; but we have many fire-places and chimneys of this period still remaining.

We have but few materials for judging how the houses were furnished, our chief authorities being the illuminated manuscripts of the time. It seems certain that in large houses tapestry was used to cover the walls, but this must refer to the solar only. The hall had probably only tables, benches, and seats. The bed must have been in the solar, or private. These, in the illuminations, have more the appearance of modern couches than beds; they are without hangings or testers, but they have pillows and bed-clothes. We also find stools, seats, and arm-chairs, of various designs, in common use, both in this century and the one preceding it. All these appear to have been well executed, and some of them are enriched with ornamental carvings and mouldings. Many are evidently executed in the turning-lathe. The doors, shutters for the windows, chests, etc., exhibit in their hinges, bolts, and locks, specimens of ornamental ironwork; and their curtains are held up by rods and rings, as in modern houses. The lesser houses, the dwellings of the common people, both in town and country, seem to have been built of wood and plaster, and thatched with reeds and straw.

The Castles

As might be expected, the strongholds of the Normans were of a more stately and imposing character than the straggling low-roofed granges in which the Saxon thanes had hitherto dwelt in safety; but still, they were built with a reference more to the means of resistance than those of elegance or comfort. The first defence of a castle was the moat or ditch, that sometimes comprised several acres; and behind it was the outer wall, generally of great height and thickness, strengthened with towers at regular distances, and pierced with loop-holes through which missiles could be discharged at the assailants. Within these defences were three divisions, consisting of the outer ballium or lower court, the inner ballium or upper court, and the keep; while the main entrance through the outer wall was protected by the barbican, with its narrow archway, and strong gates and portcullis. It was no wonder that with such a network of walls, division of courts, and multiplied means for the defenders both of safety and annoyance, the dislodgment of an obnoxious magnate should have been so hard a task even when the royal banner marched against him. While so much was done for security and resistance, nothing was left for domestic comfort but the keep, which formed the residence of the baron and his family. This was the innermost of all the buildings, to which the defenders retreated only in the last extremity, and was so strongly constructed that in the ruins of castles it generally survives as a recording monument of departed greatness. A domicile erected on such a principle must, according to our modern ideas, have been sufficiently comfortless, where every window was a shot-hole and every apartment a battery, and where light could not be admitted without also inviting an enemy. But such as it was, it was the constant home of lordly knights and high-born dames; and, therefore, their taste and ingenuity as well as their resources were employed to make the most of it.

Dress

It was in dress that the Norman aristocracy of England chiefly showed their rank, wealth, and taste; and in this they resembled their ancestors the Danes, whose love of gay clothing and rich ornaments was almost equal to their craving for bloodshed and plunder. A liking of this nature could not well exist without capricious mutations, and therefore the changes in fashion from the time of William the Conqueror to that of Henry III were so many that it becomes difficult as well as tiresome to follow them. At one time the hair of the men was shorn closely behind, and the upper lip shaved; at another, as we have related, the hair was worn of such effeminate length that the church took the alarm: and while the practice was denounced by edicts, the long flowing locks of the male part of a congregation were often menaced by shears and razor, which the preachers plucked from their sleeves when they arrived at the practical application of their sermons. Nay, on one occasion of this kind, when long beards were the order of the day, the bishop of Sees, after declaiming against them before Henry I and his courtiers, descended at the end of the discourse, and with his scissors cropped off the beards both of king and congregation. After such clerical rebukes, it is no wonder if, at the close of this period, we sometimes find the pictures of men without beard or mustachio—more especially as monks were the limners. Even when the hair was not sufficiently long for the exquisite taste of the

[1189 A.D.]

wearer, he sometimes enriched it with false locks, and thus flaunted a streamer that equalled the gayest.

As for the general articles of dress at this period, they consisted of a hood, or a cap, shaped like a Scottish bonnet, a cloak, a tunic, a pair of long tight hose, leg bandages, and shoes or short boots. All this, however, was but the ground-work, which fashion overlaid or transmuted at pleasure. In this way the cloaks became long or short; the sleeves of the tunic were sometimes so lengthened that the hand was overlapped and concealed; while the boots and shoes, instead of being adapted to the shape of the foot and the convenience of walking or riding, were curled up at the points like rams' horns, and sometimes were fastened to the knee with a gold chain.

The costliness of the stuff of which these different articles of dress were made, and the richness with which they were befurred and embroidered, was a matter of great import; and William Rufus on one occasion threw away a new pair of hose, because they cost only three shillings, declaring that a king should wear nothing so cheap. He seems to have been of a different opinion from King Stephen, who thought his hose too dear at half-a-crown. Towards the close of this period the bonnet was sometimes discarded, that the hair might be more fully seen and admired; and in this case the exquisites of the time of King John wreathed their long locks into ringlets with curling-tongs and bound them with gay ribbons. At other times, a streamer was attached to the hood, of such preposterous length that it nearly reached the middle of the leg. And yet these were the men who could endure the heat of a Syrian campaign under a heavy load of armour, and fight gallantly from morning to night upon a fair field!

In all these fopperies, the male sex appear to have so completely anticipated the ladies that little change can be found to have taken place in female costume and ornament. The gown and kerchief were still the principal articles of outer clothing, while the hair, which was worn long, was at one time plaited, and at another inclosed in a silken case, or bound with a ribbon. The under garment or tunic, where the front was given to view, was laced up, while its sleeves were so long that they were sometimes knotted up to prevent them from trailing on the ground—and the same was the case with the kerchiefs or veils, which would otherwise have dragged behind like a train. But these exaggerations were abandoned during the reign of Henry II, when a better taste discarded the long knotted sleeves and skirts for a more succinct and graceful costume. In this case, the gown was gathered closely to the waist with a girdle, and the veil demurely fastened beneath the chin, so that the whole head was covered. Sometimes the younger ladies wore their hair short and curled, while the elder ones appear with a hood, furnished with a long streamer behind, like that of the gentlemen. The female ornaments of gold and articles of jewelry may be presumed to have been nearly or altogether the same as in the earlier period, as rings, chains, and brooches are adapted to every taste, and not liable to the mutations of more flexible or transitory articles.

Domestic Life

In turning to the domestic style of life which now prevailed in England, we find that, with all the additional splendour which was introduced by the Normans, little improvement was as yet made in the substantial comforts of a home. The floor was still carpeted, or rather littered, with rushes, however lordly might be the hall; and as these rushes appear to have been seldom renewed, they must have been plentiful receptacles both of damp and

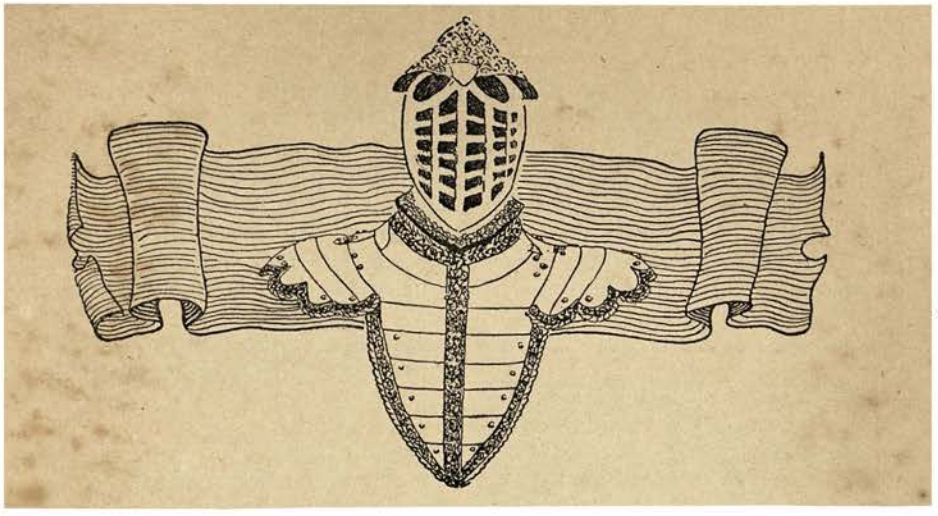
dust. On this account Fitzstephen[u] quotes it as an instance of the princely magnificence of Thomas à Becket, when chancellor, that he caused the floor of his dining-room to be covered every morning with clean straw or hay in winter and green branches of trees in summer. The historian, however, adds a startling fact which we could not otherwise have surmised, and it is that all this was for the comfort of those guests who were obliged at dinner to sit upon the floor, from no room being found for them at table! The general regulations in the daily routine of a household may be learned from the following rhyme of the period, which had probably all the authority of a well-established proverb:

Lever a cinque, diner a neuf,
Souper a cinque, coucher a neuf,
Fait vivre d'ans nonante et neuf.

(To rise at five, to dine at nine,
To sup at five, to bed at nine,
Makes a man live to ninety and nine.)

Here we have a four hours' morning fast before the first meal, followed by eight hours of endurance before the second and last succeeded. This, and only two meals a day, was perhaps the most marked change effected by the Conquest, when the four and sometimes five heavy Saxon meals *per diem* of the preceding period are taken into account.

Another striking change was in the new nomenclature imposed upon the articles of diet. While feeding and rearing, the animals suited to the table retained their Saxon names, but as soon as they were killed they became, to all intents, Norman. Thus, a cow became beef, a calf veal, a sheep mutton, a sow pork, a deer venison, and a fowl a pullet. Of the style of cookery during the Norman period we only know that rich spices were in plentiful use, and that the Normans themselves were not only moderate but also dainty eaters—epicures in the best sense of the term, in contrast to the Saxons, who, we must confess, were sheer gluttons in comparison. At solemn feasts the boar's head—that long after continued to be the chief ornament of the baronial hall and Christmas festival—was already a dainty dish, and as such was brought in at the coronation of Prince Henry, eldest son and junior king to Henry II, amidst a loud blare of trumpets. The peacock, in like manner, was such a cherished ornament of the table that either already, or soon after, kings, knights, and nobles were wont to swear solemnly over it before they ate it, when they pledged themselves to some great chivalrous enterprise. The crane was a bird for the common meals of nobles and princes. The finest wheat was made into simnel and wastel cakes, and spice-bread (*panis piperatus*), and used at the tables of the rich, in addition to common loaves; and the chief drinks, as before, were spiced wines, morat, pigment, and hippocras for the wealthy, and ale and cider for the middle classes.[c]



CHAPTER VIII

RICHARD THE LION-HEARTED.

[1189–1199 A.D.]

THERE is no instance in English history where poetry and romance have so entirely succeeded in concealing the real character, as in the case of Richard. Personal courage amounting to insanity; a desire for fame, which allowed no obstacle to stand in its way; bodily strength, which overthrew every enemy in the shock of battle—these are the real distinctions of this prince and warrior; and all have equally developed themselves in very inferior men. But his kingly rank, his perilous achievements in the Holy Land, and heroic adventures on his return, have raised him from the list of mere strong-handed, firm-purposed wielders of the sword, and invested him with an interest to which his qualities, either of heart or head, did not entitle him.

A bad son, a bad brother, we are not to be surprised if the sober pen of history describes him as a bad king. Cruel and revengeful like all his race, the sufferings of his subjects or of the rank and file of his army were matters of no consideration compared to the gratification of his lightest wish; and yet by this time the refining influence of the two previous crusades, and the growth of mercantile wealth and civil privileges resulting from them, had imparted a poetical colouring to the imagination of the noble classes throughout the west; and Richard, reckless, in sober reality, of man's life and woman's honour, took his place among the gay troubadours who sang the praises of their ladies' charms, and has left some sonnets to the present time which breathe the most luxurious accents of the south. The ten years' reign of this fighting and singing potentate were passed almost entirely in absence from his kingdom and in total ignorance of the English tongue.

He was in Anjou when his father died, and gave a startling proof by his first proceeding of what was to be expected; this was to seize the treasurer of the

late king and imprison him till he had yielded the royal wealth, and also all that he himself possessed.[b] His subsequent conduct contributed more to turn the tide of public opinion in his favour. He dismissed his own counsellors, and called to his service those who remained faithful to his father.

To take formal possession of his transmarine dominions, and to settle the existing differences between the crowns of France and England, detained Richard a few weeks on the Continent. But he immediately ordered his mother Eleanor to be liberated from confinement, and invested her with the high dignity of regent. The queen dowager exercised her authority with prudence and moderation. As she proceeded in royal state from district to district, she distributed alms for the soul of her late husband, released the prisoners who had been confined without due process of law, forgave offences committed against the crown, restrained the severity of the foresters, and reversed the outlawries issued upon common fame. By proclamation she ordered all freemen to take the oath of allegiance to Richard, and to swear that they would be obedient to his laws. At her invitation the barons and prelates assembled at Winchester to receive their new sovereign, and the third day of September was fixed for the ceremony of his coronation.

RICHARD I OF ENGLAND
(1157–1199)

At the appointed hour the procession moved from his chambers in the palace of Westminster. The whole way to the high altar in the church had been previously covered with crimson cloth. First came the clergy, abbots, and bishops, followed by two barons with the cap of state and golden spurs, and two earls carrying the rod and sceptre. The three swords were borne by John, the king's brother, David, brother to the king of Scotland, and William, earl of Salisbury; and to these succeeded six earls, and six barons carrying on their shoulders the different articles of royal apparel. The crown had been intrusted to the hands of the earl of Aumale, who was followed by Richard himself, supported by the bishops of Durham and Bath. Over his head was borne a canopy of silk, stretched on four spears and carried by four barons. Baldwin, archbishop of Canterbury, received the king at the altar, and administered to him the usual oath. Richard then threw off his upper garment, put on sandals of gold, was anointed on the head, breast, and shoulders, and received successively from the proper officers the cap, tunic, dalmatic, swords, spurs, and mantle. Thus arrayed he was led to the altar, and solemnly adjured by the archbishop not to assume the royal dignity unless he were resolved to observe the regal oath. He renewed his promise, took the crown from the altar and gave it to the prelate, who immediately placed it on his head. The ceremony of the coronation was now completed. Richard repaired to the throne; and, after the celebration of the mass, was reconducted in state to his apartments.

[1189 A.D.]

The young king had taken the cross during the reign of his father. By a prince of his adventurous spirit an expedition to the Holy Land would at any time have been hailed with joy; at the present it offered to his mind irresistible attractions. After the fatal battle of Tiberias, Acre, Sidon, Ascalon, and Jerusalem had fallen into the hands of Saladin; Tyre alone remained in possession of the Christians. The considerations which would have deterred a more prudent monarch served but to inflame the ambition of Richard; and to make preparations for the recovery of Jerusalem and the discomfiture of the Moslem conqueror was the great object of his policy during the four months which he allotted to his residence in England. With this view he hastily filled, in a council at Pipewell, the vacant abbeys and bishoprics, and divided the powers of the regency in his absence between his chancellor William Longchamp, bishop of Ely, and his justiciary Hugh, bishop of Durham. To satisfy his mother, he added to her dower all the lands which had been settled on Matilda [Good Queen Maud], the queen of the first Henry, and on Alice the relict of Stephen; and, that his brother John might through gratitude be attached to his interest, he gave him, besides the countship of Mortain in Normandy, the earldoms of Cornwall, Dorset, Somerset, Gloucester, Nottingham, Derby, and Lancaster in England, about one-third of the whole kingdom.

In the treasury at Salisbury above a hundred thousand marks were deposited, the fruit of his father's rapacity; but he deemed this enormous sum inadequate to the gigantic projects which he had conceived, and sought to augment it by expedients most disgraceful to himself and injurious to his successors. The demesne lands, the honours and the offices of the crown, were exposed to public sale. Exorbitant sums, under the name of presents, were extorted from every new bishop and abbot. For a bribe of three thousand pounds he remitted his displeasure against his natural brother Geoffrey, who had been lately chosen archbishop of York; he sold the earldom of Northumberland to the bishop of Durham during the term of his natural life for £10,000; and in consideration of an equal sum he restored to the king of Scots the castles of Berwick and Roxburgh, with all the right of superiority over the crown of Scotland which had been acquired by Henry.[1] Then came the punishment of real or presumed offenders. Glanville, the favourite of the last sovereign, was cast into prison, and compelled to pay £15,000 for his liberty; and Stephen, the last seneschal of Anjou, was kept in irons till he paid 30,000 Angevin pounds, and bound himself to pay 15,000 more for his release.[d]

This partial evil, however, turned out to be a universal good; for many of the citizens availed themselves of the opportunity to exchange their tenure of house and land, at the will of the king, for a perpetual rent. Towns also acquired fresh privileges on payment of an immediate sum; and the great masses of property which had accumulated in the hands of the kings from the time of the Conquest were broken up into smaller and more manageable

[1] The king's charter to the king of Scots may be seen in Rymer's *Fœdera*.[k] It is not, as has sometimes been supposed, a formal recognition of the independence of Scotland, but a resignation on the part of Richard of all those rights which Henry had extorted from William for his ransom. In lieu of them he received £10,000, probably the sum which William would have given to Henry. The respective rights of the two crowns were now replaced on the same footing as formerly: William was to do to Richard whatever Malcolm ought to have done to Richard's predecessors, and Richard was to do to William whatever they ought to have done to Malcolm, according to an award to be given by eight barons, to be equally chosen by the two kings. Moreover, William was to possess in England the lands which Malcolm had possessed, and to become the liege man of Richard for all lands for which his predecessors had been the liege men of the English kings.

portions and sold to new proprietors. Richard saw the success of his scheme in the avidity with which the citizens secured their corporate freedom and local government, and only regretted he had not more franchises to sell. "I would sell London," he said, "if I could find a man rich enough to buy it."[b]

When the means of raising money were exhausted in England, he sailed to Normandy to fill his coffers by similar expedients.

THE PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS

Before we accompany him on his way to Palestine it will be proper to advert to the fate of the English Jews. The Jews of this period were, in every Christian country, the sole or the principal bankers. As no law existed to regulate the interest of money, their profits were enormous; and at the time of a military expedition, and especially of a crusade, their demands always rose in proportion to the number and wants of the borrowers. Hence, sensible that they had earned the hatred of the people, they were careful to deserve by the value of their offerings the friendship of the prince. In England they had grown rich under the protection of the late king; but as Philip of France had, at his accession, banished them from his dominions, confiscated their property, and annulled the obligations of their debtors, an idea was confidently entertained that similar measures would be adopted by the new sovereign. To obviate the expected calamity, the Jews had hastened with valuable presents from every county to London; but Richard—whether he foresaw the probability of a popular tumult, or thought that their presence would pollute the holiness of the ceremony—forbade them to appear before him on the day of his coronation.

In defiance of this prohibition, some had the temerity to mix with the crowd and enter the gates of the palace. They were expelled with insults, followed with clubs and stones, and murdered by the fury of their pursuers. A report immediately gained credit that the king had given a general permission to kill them and plunder their property. The populace assembled in great numbers; every Jew found in the streets was murdered without mercy, and every house belonging to a Jew was set on fire. It was in vain that Richard despatched the justiciar with several knights to disperse the rioters. These officers were compelled to flee for their own safety, and the work of conflagration and murder continued till the next morning. The king hanged three of the ringleaders, on the pretext that they had burned the houses of Christians; but he refused to irritate his subjects at the beginning of his reign by acts of severity in favour of a hated people, and contented himself with issuing a proclamation in which he took the Jews under his protection, and forbade any molestation to be offered to them either in their persons or property.

This impunity, however, encouraged the enemies of the Israelites, and the crusaders in their way to the coast were careful to imitate their brethren in the capital. The excesses at Lynn, Norwich, Stamford, and Lincoln seem to have been caused by the impulse of the moment; those at York were the result of an organised conspiracy. Before sunset on March 16th, 1190, a body of men entered the city, and in the darkness of the night they attacked the house of Bennet, a wealthy Jew who had perished in the riot in London. His wife and children were massacred, his property was pillaged, and the building was burned. The house marked for destruction on the following night belonged to Jocen, another Jew equally wealthy, but who had escaped

[1189–1190 A.D.]

from the murder of his brethren in the metropolis. He had, however, the wisdom to retire into the castle with his treasures and family, and was imitated by most of the Jews in York and the neighbourhood.

Unfortunately, one morning the governor left the castle; at his return the fugitives, who amounted to five hundred men, independently of the women and children, mistrusting his intentions, refused him admission. In conjunction with the sheriff he called the people to his assistance; the fortress was besieged night and day; a considerable ransom was offered and rejected; and the Jews in their despair formed the horrid resolution of disappointing with their own hands the malice of their enemies. They buried their gold and silver, threw into the flames everything that was combustible, cut the throats of their wives and children, and consummated the tragedy by stabbing each other. The few who had not the courage to join in this bloody deed told the tale from the walls to the assailants, and to save their lives implored permission to receive baptism. The condition was accepted, and the moment the gates were thrown open they were massacred. The conquerors then marched to the cathedral, extorted from the officers the bonds which the Jews had deposited with them for greater security, and making a bonfire burned them in the middle of the nave. These outrages brought the chancellor to York; but the principal offenders fled into Scotland, and he contented himself with deposing the sheriff and governor, and taking the recognisances of the citizens to appear and answer in the king's court. In narrating so many horrors, it is a consolation to find them uniformly reprobated by the historians of the time. If the ringleaders endeavoured to inflame the passions of the populace by religious considerations, it was merely as a cloak to their real design of sharing among themselves the spoils of their victims and of extinguishing their debts by destroying the securities together with the persons of their creditors.[d]

RICHARD IN SICILY

It was mid-summer in 1190 before Richard and Philip set out on their great expedition. Richard proceeded from Tours, Philip from Paris. They met at Vézelay, and thence marched to Lyons. The arrowy Rhone was with difficulty crossed. The pavilions of the associated armies were at length pitched in the meadows on its bank. The leaders and their followers here separated. Richard took the road to Marseilles. His fleet had not appeared. His impatience drove him onward; and he left his army, coasting along the Italian shores, till he reached Messina. His fleet was there before him. At Messina he engaged in a quarrel with the prince and the people. The king of France, who had arrived before Richard, wisely kept aloof from these differences. It was Richard's personal quarrel about the dower of his sister; and it was at last ended by the payment of forty thousand ounces of gold by Tancred, the king of Sicily, and by the betrothal of Arthur of Brittany, the nephew of Richard, to the daughter of the Sicilian king. From this period Philip Augustus saw in Richard the haughty assertor of his private interests, and he devoted himself to the advancement of his own rival interests, which finally expelled the kings of England from Normandy.[e]

Richard and Philip, though jealous of each other, contrived to mask their real feelings, and spent the winter in apparent amity. But soon another subject of dissension arose. Richard had offered his hand to Berengaria, the daughter of Sancho, king of Navarre; and his mother Eleanor had arrived

with the princess at Naples. Philip immediately brought forward the claim of his sister Adelais, who had for so many years been espoused to the king of England; but Richard declared that he would never marry a woman who had been, as he could prove, the mistress of his father. During the dispute Tancred put into the hands of the king a letter which he pretended to have received from Philip, containing proposals for a confederacy against Richard; and Philip, when it was shown to him, pronounced it a forgery, an unworthy artifice to countenance the English monarch in his rejection of Adelais. At length it was agreed that Richard should be released from his contract with the French princess, that he should pay to Philip 10,000 marks by instalments in the course of five years, and that at his return from Palestine he should restore Adelais, with the strong places which he held as her marriage portion. Some days later the king of France sailed for Acre. Richard accompanied him a few miles; then turning to Reggio, took on board Eleanor and Berengaria, and conducted them to Messina.

At length the king bade adieu to Sicily with a fleet of fifty-three galleys and one hundred and fifty other ships. Eleanor had returned to England; the queen of Sicily and the princess of Navarre accompanied the expedition. Nine months had already elapsed since Richard commenced his journey, and yet, though he was but a few days' sail from the Holy Land, the impetuosity of his character led him to squander away two more months in a very different enterprise. His fleet had been dispersed by a tempest, and when he reached Crete, twenty-five ships were missing. He proceeded as far as Rhodes; but being detained there by sickness, despatched some swift sailing vessels to collect the stragglers. From these he learned that two ships had been stranded on the coast of Cyprus, that the wrecks had been plundered and the crews thrown into prison. As soon as his health would allow, he sailed to Limasol, and found before the port the vessel which carried his sister and Berengaria. They had been invited to land by Isaac, a prince of the Comnenian family, who styled himself emperor of Cyprus; but, distrusting the faith of the tyrant, had remained in the open sea awaiting the arrival of Richard. He immediately demanded satisfaction for the treatment of the crusaders, and received an absolute refusal.

Isaac had manned six galleys for the protection of the harbour, and had drawn up his forces along the beach. After a sharp contest the galleys were taken; Richard landed with his usual impetuosity, and Limasol was taken. The next day Isaac suffered himself to be surprised in his camp by the activity of the invaders, and escaped with difficulty to Nicosia. Humbled by these disasters, and disheartened by the defection of the Cypriots, he condescended to sue for a conference, which was held in a plain before Limasol. After much conversation, it was agreed that Isaac should pay 3,500 marks of gold; that he should do homage to the king of England; should resign to him all his castles; should serve with five hundred knights in the holy war; and at his return, if he had given satisfaction to his new lord, should be reinstated in the possession of his dominions. But the Cypriot soon repented of his facility, and escaped in the night from his guards. Resistance, however, was fruitless. Another battle was lost; Nicosia surrendered; and his daughter, on whom he doted most tenderly, fell into the hands of the conqueror. With a broken heart he left the strong fortress of St. Andrea, and threw himself at the feet of Richard, who ordered him to be bound in chains of silver, and to be confined in a castle on the coast of Palestine.

It was at Limasol that the king married Berengaria, who was anointed and crowned by the bishop of Evreux. Here also he received a visit from

[1191 A.D.]

Guy de Lusignan, the unfortunate king of Jerusalem. Guy had worn that crown in right of his wife Sybilla; but at the siege of Acre he found a dangerous competitor in Conrad, the marquis of Montferrat and prince of Tyre. Sybilla was dead; and Conrad, who had married her sister Isabel, contended that the crown could no longer belong to Lusignan, but had descended to himself as the husband of the real heiress. Philip, who had reached Acre, espoused the cause of Conrad; and this alone would have been a sufficient reason with Richard to support the interest of his rival. He received Lusignan with honour, acknowledged him for king of Jerusalem, and gave him 2,000 marks to relieve his present necessities.[d]

RICHARD REACHES PALESTINE

Richard at length set sail from Cyprus, on the 5th of June, 1191. Nearly a year had passed since he and Philip had met on the plains of Vézelay. During that period, and for a year previous, Acre had been in vain besieged by the Christian host. As the English fleet approached the city, Richard gazed upon the high tower, and then the smaller fortresses showed him their formidable fronts. There he saw the Christian hosts encamped in the plain; but on the distant hills, beyond the besiegers, was the mighty army of Saladin, whose standard waved amongst innumerable tents, the bright colours of his pavilions glittering in that summer sun. As Richard landed, a shout of joy went up from the crusaders' camp, with the clang of trumpets and the loud chorus of national songs; and the night was passed in dance and revelry, amidst an illumination of waxen torches which lighted up the whole valley. The English king, having heard that the king of France had made liberal donations to his soldiers, proclaimed a higher rate of pay for everyone in his service, of whatever nation. But an intermitting fever checked his activity, and he waited for the arrival of some more men from England.

Philip led his troops to an assault of the city, and was repulsed. As Richard regained his strength the attacks were more vigorous. The battering-ram was brought up to shake the massive walls; and amidst its heavy strokes the Turks shouted and filled the air with the noise of their gongs, so that Saladin, on the distant hills, should hear the signal and come to their relief. The crusaders had to assail the city and to defend themselves. Day by day there were desperate battles in the trenches. But still the siege went on. The Greek fire was rained from the walls of Acre on the besiegers; and the besiegers cast large stones amongst the besieged from their cumbrous machines. All the various machines were plied night and day. But more formidable was the approach of famine. Saladin could not penetrate the lines of the crusaders to supply the brave defenders of Acre with new stores. After long negotiation it was agreed that the city should be surrendered, a certain portion of the garrison being left as hostages for the performance of the conditions of capitulation, the most important in the eyes of the crusaders being that Saladin should restore the holy cross. The Turks were also to pay a large sum of money, and set at liberty fifteen hundred Christian captives.

Philip of France, after the capture of Acre, resolved to return home. A furious bigot, who had, in the beginning of his reign, banished everyone from his dominions who dared to gainsay the laws of the church, he was yet the craftiest of politicians. He had measured himself with Richard, and had found that the subtlety of the fox might be as effectual as the rage of the lion. He had borne indignities from him. He was jealous that amongst all

the host of the crusaders "there was not of him a word, but all of Richard the king." He had his own schemes to pursue in the absence of Richard from his continental dominions. The duke of Normandy bound his feudal superior, by the customary oaths, not to make war upon his territories while he was not there to defend them; and the king of France left ten thousand soldiers under the command of Richard. But they parted in anger and mutual hatred. The crusaders regarded Philip as a deserter. If he had remained, perhaps his policy, if not his religion, might have saved the Christian character from the eternal disgrace of one of the atrocities of the "lion-hearted." We shall not trust ourselves to narrate this crowning horror of the siege of Acre in any other words[1] than in those of the chronicler, Geoffrey de Vinsauf,[l] who was himself a crusader.

Saladin had delayed to restore the cross within the time agreed, and he had asked further time. "When it became clearly evident to King Richard that a longer period had elapsed than had been fixed, and that Saladin was obdurate and would not give himself trouble to ransom the hostages, he called together a council of the chiefs of the people, by whom it was resolved that the hostages should all be hanged, except a few nobles of the higher class, who might ransom themselves or be exchanged for some Christian captives. King Richard, aspiring to destroy the Turks root and branch, and to punish their wanton arrogance, as well as to abolish the law of Mohammed and to vindicate the Christian religion, on the Friday after the Assumption of the blessed Virgin Mary, ordered two thousand seven hundred of the Turkish hostages to be led forth from the city and hanged; his soldiers marched forward with delight to fulfil his commands, and to retaliate, with the assent of the divine grace, by taking revenge upon those who had destroyed so many of the Christians with missiles from bows and arbalasts."

In the guilt of Richard the duke of Burgundy participated, by massacring the prisoners who had been taken under the banner of France. Saladin retaliated by the decapitation of his Christian prisoners. After this mutual slaughter, Richard led his army, now reduced to thirty thousand men, by the line of the coast to Jaffa. They marched, as in the time of King Stephen, with a high standard on a wagon. Pack-horses and loaded wains went slowly on by this difficult path on the side of the sea; and the Saracens, who hovered round their march, often attacked the troops and plundered the baggage. The crusaders were moving on amidst sacred localities, and Capernaum and Cæsarea were familiar names, at least to the priests who marched with them. During the night they were stung by venomous reptiles; and when again on their march, the troops of the indefatigable Saladin hovered around them—Turks and Bedouins—darkening the air with their showers of arrows. "The strength of all paganism," says Vinsauf,[t] "had gathered together from Damascus to Persia, from the Mediterranean to the East."[c]

THE RETURN AND CAPTURE OF RICHARD

Thus terminated the crusade. If Jerusalem could have been won by personal strength and bravery, it might have been won by Richard. His exploits, so superior to those of his fellows, threw a splendour around him which endeared him to the Christians and extorted the admiration of the infidels.

[1] This work, *Itinerarium perigrinorum et gesta regis Ricardi*, etc., was formerly attributed to Geoffrey, but recent research has shown that it is in large part a translation of the French poem by Ambrose—*L'estoire de la guerre sainte*.

[1192 A.D.]

But the little influence which they had on the issue of the expedition will justify a doubt whether he possessed the talents of a general. He seems to have been content with the glory, without the advantages of victory; his fickleness prevented him from pursuing for any time the same object; and his passionate temper made him fitter to promote dissension than to procure unanimity among his associates. As soon as his health would permit he paid his debts, satisfied the claims of his followers, and sailed from Acre. The next morning he turned to take a last view of the shore, and with outstretched arms exclaimed: "Most holy land, I commend thee to the care of the Almighty. May he grant me life to return and rescue thee from the yoke of the infidels!" His fleet, with his wife, sister, and the princess of Cyprus on board, had sailed some days before, and reached Sicily without any accident. The king followed in a single ship, and took a different course; but his progress was often retarded by contrary winds, and a month had elapsed before he reached the isle of Corfu.

Here he hired three coasting vessels to carry him and his suite, consisting of twenty persons, to Ragusa and Zara. What route he meant afterwards to pursue is uncertain; but he was aware that the king of France had confederated with his brother John to dispossess him of his dominions; that Henry, the emperor of Germany, the rightful heir to Sicily, was irritated by his league with Tancred;[1] and that many princes, the relations of Conrad, had professed themselves hostile to him, as the supposed murderer of that nobleman. Hence, as he had assumed the garb of a pilgrim, and sought to disguise himself by the length of his beard and hair, it is probable that he hoped to cross the Continent unknown, and to elude by artifice the snares of his enemies. However that may be, he was driven by a storm on the coast of Istria, between Aquileia and Venice, and proceeded towards Görtz, the residence of Meinhard, a nephew of Conrad. One of his pages appeared before that chieftain with a present of a valuable ruby, and solicited a passport for Baldwin of Bethune, and Hugh, the merchant, pilgrims returning from Jerusalem. "The present," he exclaimed, "is the present of a prince. He must be King Richard. Tell him he may come to me in peace." The pretended pilgrim, however, was suspicious of danger, and, having bought horses, fled in the night. Baldwin and seven others remained, and were seized by Meinhard, who immediately sent a messenger with the information to his brother Frederick of Betesow.

The king had reached Freisach, when he was discovered by a Norman knight in the service of Frederick; but mindful of his duty to his native sovereign, the knight warned him of his danger and endeavoured to conceal his arrival. Though six of his companions were taken, Richard escaped with one knight and a boy acquainted with the language. They travelled three days and nights without entering a house or purchasing provisions, and found themselves on the fourth day at Erdburg, in the neighbourhood of Vienna. The boy was sent to market. By the display of his money he excited curiosity, but he eluded every inquiry by answering that his master was a rich merchant who would arrive in three days. Richard, though aware of his danger, was too weak to prosecute his journey. The boy was again sent to market, was seized and put to the torture, and at last revealed the name and retreat of

[1] He had married Constanza, the true heir at the death of King William, her brother, and had prepared to assert her right, at the time that Richard made the league offensive and defensive with Tancred, and agreed to marry his nephew to Tancred's daughter. Within a fortnight after the king's departure from Messina, Henry entered Campania, and proceeded as far as Naples, where the heat and sickness almost destroyed his army. Hence arose the enmity of the emperor to Richard.

the king. When Richard saw his house surrounded by armed men, he drew his sword and refused to yield to anyone but their chieftain. That chieftain immediately appeared—Leopold, duke of Austria; the same Leopold whom he had treated with the most cruel insult in the town of Acre, and who, as brother-in-law to Isaac, conceived himself entitled to revenge the wrongs of that unfortunate monarch. He received the king's sword, and committed him to the care of a baron named Hadmar, to be closely confined in the castle of Durnstein.[d]

ENGLAND DURING THE CRUSADE

When Richard left England, early in December, 1189, he left the kingdom in the charge of two prelates, William of Longchamp, bishop of Ely, and Hugh of Puiset, bishop of Durham, as joint justiciars. He could not have chosen two representatives less fitted to work satisfactorily together. Hugh was a member of a rich old family of Champagne, a cousin of the king, and with very exalted ideas of his own lineage and position. William was a Norman, probably of gentle birth, but a self-made man, and accordingly laughed at by his Norman associates as a *parvenu*. Then, too, he was proud, arrogant, and ambitious, with a contempt for the English and all things English. Thus he was likely to find opposition both among the Norman nobles and the English gentry and middle classes.

But to Richard he was loyalty itself. Before the king left Normandy the two bishops had quarrelled, and Richard settled matters by making Longchamp, already chancellor, sole justiciar. At the same time the office of papal legate was conferred upon him. At Richard's departure he was practically supreme in both church and state. At once his conceit and arrogance began to alienate from him even those loyal supporters of the king who would ordinarily have stood by him. He assumed royal airs, travelled about and held his court in regal pomp, and by his personal display called forth derision from the Normans. His hatred of the English was reciprocated. It was at this point that John, who had been released from an oath to remain out of England during his brother's absence, crossed the Channel, and gathered together in an opposition court at Lancaster all those whom Longchamp had alienated.

John had looked with great favour on Richard's project of going to the Holy Land. Kings had gone on crusades before and had never come back. It was more than likely, thought John, that Richard's valour and impetuosity would lead to his death, and in that event John was determined to succeed him. To be sure, Arthur of Brittany, the son of his elder brother Geoffrey, had a better right, but Arthur was a mere child, and it had often happened in England before that a child, although the nearest heir to the throne, had been set aside for a man. Whether Richard really intended Arthur for his successor, or whether he directed Longchamp to forward that prince's cause as an offset to John's known ambition, is not clear, but the justiciar's actions made it evident that the king preferred his nephew to his brother. For a time the influence of Queen Eleanor prevented John's openly opposing the bishop, but in 1191 she joined Richard with Berengaria at Messina; and John, thus released from restraint, soon found an opportunity of standing forth as protector of the nation against the unpopular justiciar.[a]

For some offence, real or pretended, Longchamp had condemned Gerard de Camville to lose the shrievalty, with the custody of the castle of Lincoln; but while he besieged that fortress, John, at the head of a numerous army,

[1192 A.D.]

surprised the royal castles of Nottingham and Tickhill. The chancellor was taken unawares; finding himself unequal to the contest, he offered to negotiate; and after the rejection of several proposals, it was mutually agreed that a certain number of the king's castles should be placed in the custody of different barons, who should be sworn to preserve them for the king during his life, and to deliver them to John in the event of the king's death. By this arrangement the prince gained one important step towards the object of his ambition, while the chancellor was still allowed to retain the exercise of the royal authority.

This quarrel was succeeded by another, still more disastrous to Longchamp. Geoffrey,[1] the king's natural brother, had been appointed to the archiepiscopal see of York; but Richard, though he had remitted his displeasure against the new prelate in consideration of a large sum of money, compelled him to swear that he would continue to reside on the Continent [for a period of three years]. He was, however, consecrated, in virtue of a papal mandate, by the archbishop of Tours, and hastened to England to obtain the possession of his church. The chancellor had given orders that on his arrival he should be required to take an oath of allegiance, or to quit the kingdom immediately. Geoffrey eluded the officers; took refuge in the church of St. Martin; and, when the requisition was made, haughtily replied that he should never submit to the orders of that traitor, the bishop of Ely. For three days his asylum was respected; on the fourth he was conveyed by force to the castle of Dover. At the solicitation of the bishop of London Longchamp allowed him to be released and to repair to the capital.

The news of this event was received with pleasure by John and his party. That prince, who had hitherto regarded his illegitimate brother as an enemy, now pretended to feel for him the most tender affection. He wrote to all the bishops and barons to assemble at Reading; while Longchamp, by other letters, forbade them to accept the invitation of a prince whose object it was to disinherit his sovereign. The assembly, however, was held; John and Geoffrey met, wept, and embraced. Two very suspicious papers were produced and read, both purporting to be letters from Richard; the one forming a council of regency, with the archbishop of Rouen as president,[2] the other absolving Geoffrey from his oath and allowing him to visit his diocese. The chancellor had engaged to appear before them. He had even collected a formidable army; but distrust and terror induced him to flee from Windsor to London, where he exhorted the citizens to shut their gates against the king's enemies; and, finding them disinclined to obey, retired into the Tower. He was followed to the capital by his pursuers, who obtained admission, on taking an oath to be faithful to Richard and to maintain the franchises of the city.

Longchamp, in a council held at St. Paul's, was condemned to resign the office of justiciar, to surrender all the royal castles but three, and to give security that he would not leave the kingdom till he had fulfilled these con-

[1 Geoffrey seems to have been his father's favourite son till he was supplanted by John. Possessed of all the vigour and ambition of the Plantagenets, he shrank from the clerical life into which he was forced. In nominating him to the see of York Richard was faithfully carrying out his father's last wishes, but he was probably at heart glad thus to shut him forever from any chance of attaining the throne upon which Richard unjustly suspected him of having designs. "Geoffrey," says Kate Norgate,[i] " never did anything to justify the suspicion, but showed on the contrary every disposition to act loyally towards both his brothers, if they would but have acted with equal loyalty towards him."]

[2 The archbishop of Rouen, Walter of Coutances, had been sent by Richard from Messina as a mediator, in the previous year. Exactly what his instructions were it is impossible to say, but it is quite likely that one alternative provided for the dismissal of Longchamp as justiciar. It was this letter of instructions apparently that the archbishop produced in this contingency.]

ditions. He had not been present; but the next morning he met his accusers in a field to the east of the city. The citizens mustered in a circle round the lords, and ten thousand spectators are said to have assembled behind them. A long time was spent in altercation. The chancellor defended himself with vigour. He had been a faithful servant to his sovereign; he was ready to account for every penny of the king's revenue. Still he would submit to their judgment of the preceding day;[1] not that he meant to resign any office intrusted to him by his royal master, but because it was useless to resist the power which was arrayed against him. He retired to Dover castle, one of the three castles reserved for him. Thence he attempted to escape to the Continent in the disguise of a monk, but was discovered and brought back. He next put on female attire, and proceeded to the beach with a web of cloth under one arm and a measure under the other. But his unusual gait provoked suspicion: on nearer inspection his beard betrayed him; and the women of the place loaded him with insults, till the officers rescued him from their fury and conveyed him to prison. John allowed him to cross the sea, and appointed the archbishop of Rouen grand justiciar and vice-chancellor in his place.

THE CAPTIVITY OF RICHARD

Such was the state of England when the news arrived of Richard's departure from Acre. The people, by whom with all his vices he was beloved on account of his valour, were eager to behold the champion of the cross; but week after week the public expectation was alternately roused and disappointed. Rumours the most sinister and improbable had begun to prevail, when the secret of his detention was revealed by the copy of a letter to the king of France from the emperor Henry VI. This imperial speculator, for the sum of £60,000, had purchased the royal captive from Leopold; and "the enemy of the empire and disturber of France," to use his words, was now lodged in chains in one of the castles of the Tyrol, surrounded by trusty guards, who with their naked swords attended him by day and watched at his bedside by night.

This intelligence seems to have electrified all Europe. If the king's enemies rejoiced at his disgrace, the clergy and people, all who had admired his valour or sighed for the deliverance of Palestine, lamented his misfortune and loudly invoked in his favour the interference of the Vatican. In England his subjects renewed their oaths of allegiance; the bishops and prelates assembled at Oxford, and sent deputies to give him advice and consolation; and Eleanor by repeated complaints induced Pope Celestine to pronounce the sentences of excommunication and interdict against Leopold, and to threaten similar measures against Henry, unless he immediately liberated his captive. There was, however, one man who openly rejoiced at the intelligence—John, the king's brother, who repaired in haste to Paris, surrendered to Philip some portions of Normandy, did him homage for the rest of Richard's continental possessions, and returning to England assembled an army to contend for the crown. But, as the king observed, "John was not a man to succeed by force when force was opposed to him." Though the fidelity of the grand justiciar was doubtful, the prelates and barons unfurled the royal standard; an armament of foreign mercenaries was repulsed from the coast;

[1 Of this action Hallam says: "It was a remarkable assumption of power by that assembly, and the earliest authority for a leading principle of our constitution, the responsibility of ministers to parliament."]

[1193 A.D.]

and the pusillanimous usurper consented to an armistice, that he might form new plans and watch the course of events.

At the same time his confederate, the king of France, having sent a messenger to Richard to give him back his homage, entered Normandy with a powerful army. Several fortresses yielded through fear or treachery; but Rouen, the capital, was saved by the exertions of the earl of Essex, who had lately returned from the Holy Land. He harangued the citizens; pointed their indignation against the perfidy of the man who had turned his back to the infidels; and animated their patriotism by the prospect of the desolation around them. They courageously repelled the enemy. Even the women mounted the walls and poured boiling pitch on the heads of the assailants. Philip's military engines were burned, and the garrison boldly threw open the gates and invited him to advance if he dared. He preferred to retire, and his departure gave a short pause to the war.

Longchamp, the chancellor, who still remained in exile, was the first to discover the prison of his sovereign. By repeated solicitations he obtained permission of Henry to conduct Richard to the diet at Hagenau. Before this august but incompetent tribunal the king listened to the accusations against him: that he had confederated with Tancred to oppose the right of the emperor to the crown of Sicily; that he had unjustly seized the kingdom of Cyprus; that he had hired assassins to murder the marquis of Montferrat,[1] and that he had treated with insult the German nation at the siege of Acre. His manly and persuasive defence was received by the princes of the diet with applause and commiseration. Even the cold-hearted Henry appeared to relent. He ordered the king's chains to be struck off, showed him the respect due to a crowned head, and consented to treat about the amount of his ransom.[d]

THE CAPTIVE KING'S DEFENCE

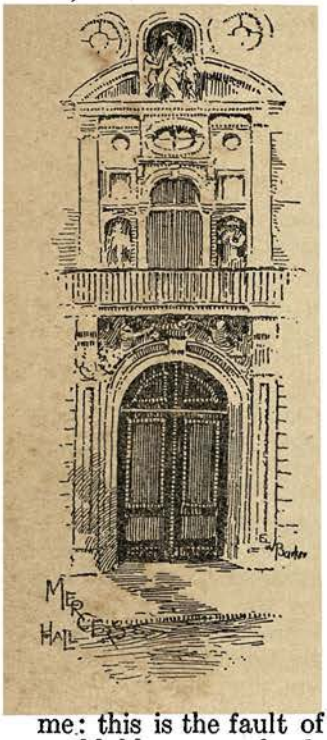
The reply of Richard to the charges brought against him by the emperor Henry VI has been preserved. Its simple eloquence must have had, as the contemporary writers assert, a very considerable influence in securing his release. The reply follows:

"I have been born in such a station as to give an account of my actions to none but God; but these are of such a nature that I fear not even the judgment of men, and especially, sire, of a prince so just as yourself.

"My connection with the king of Sicily ought not to have grieved you; I have been able to keep on good terms with a man of whose aid I stood in need, without justly offending a prince whose friend and ally I was. As for the king of France, I know of nothing that ought to have brought on me his ill-humour, except my having been more successful than he. Either by opportunity or fortune I have done those feats which he would have been glad to achieve: this is the sum of my crimes towards him. With regard to the king of Cyprus, everyone knows I have done no more than avenge the injuries that I had first received; and, in avenging myself on him, I have freed his subjects from the yoke by which he oppressed them. I have disposed of my conquest. Was it not my right? And if there was anyone who ought to have found fault with it, it was the emperor of Constantinople, by whom neither you nor I have been very kindly treated. The duke of Austria has

[1] To repel this charge a letter was produced from the sheik or Old Man of the Mountain, the chief of the Assassins, who declared that he had procured the murder of Conrad in revenge for the injustice offered by that nobleman to some of his subjects.

too well revenged the injury of which he complains to reckon it still among the number of my crimes. He was the first to fail in causing his standard to be hoisted in a place where we commanded, the king of France and myself in person. I punished him for it too severely: he has had his revenge twofold; he ought not to have anything upon his mind on this score, but the consciousness of a vengeance that Christianity permits not.



"The assassination of the marquis de Montferrat is as foreign to my character as my presumed correspondence with Saladin is improbable. I have not evinced, hitherto, such a dread of my enemies that men should believe me capable of attacking their lives otherwise than sword in hand; and I have done mischief enough to Saladin to compel men to think that I at least have not been his friend.

"My actions speak for me, and justify my cause more than words: Acre taken, two battles won, parties defeated, convoys carried off, with such abundance of rich spoils (with which the world is witness I have not enriched myself), indicate sufficiently, without my saying so, that I have never spared Saladin. I have received from him small presents, as fruits and similar things, which this Saracen, no less commendable for his politeness and generosity than for his valour and conduct, hath sent to me from time to time. The king of France received some as well as myself; and these are the civilities which brave men during war perform one towards another without ill consequence.

"It is said that I have not taken Jerusalem. I should have taken it if time for it had been given me: this is the fault of my enemies, not mine; and I believe no just man could blame me for having deferred an enterprise (which can always be undertaken) in order to afford to my people a succour which they could not longer wait for.

"There, sire, these are my crimes! Just and generous as you are, you, without doubt, acknowledge my innocence; and if I am not mistaken, I perceive that you are affected at my misfortune."

THE RELEASE OF THE KING

The prospect of liberty revived the spirits of Richard, who despatched the chancellor to England with a letter to the council of regency. By their orders a tax of twenty shillings was imposed on every knight's fee; the plate of the churches was sold or redeemed; one-fourth of every man's income was extorted from the clergy and laity; and all were required to make the king such presents as might deserve his gratitude. But, whether it were owing to the poverty of the nation, or to the peculation of the officers, the amount fell short of the sum at which it had been computed; and to supply the deficiency a second and even a third collection was made in despite of the murmurs and discontent of the people. In the mean time Henry was slow to conclude the bargain, as long as it remained in his power to make it more

profitable. The negotiation was suspended, and renewed, and protracted; and five months elapsed before the terms could be finally adjusted.

These were that Richard should pay 100,000 marks for his ransom; should restore Isaac, the late emperor of Cyprus, to his liberty, but not to his dominions; and should deliver the captive daughter of Isaac to the care of her uncle, the duke of Austria. Henry in return engaged to set the king at liberty on the receipt of the money; to aid him against all his enemies; and to invest him with the feudal sovereignty of the kingdom of Provence, an obsolete right, which the emperors had long claimed but had not the power to enforce. A distant day was assigned for the performance of these conditions. Eleanor and the archbishop of Rouen, who had resigned the administration to Hubert Walter, archbishop of Canterbury, joined the royal captive; and Richard, to bind the emperor more firmly to his interests, adopted the strange expedient advised by his mother. In an assembly of the German princes and English envoys, by the delivery of the cap from his head he resigned his crown into the hands of Henry; who restored it to him again to be held as a fief of the empire with the obligation of a yearly payment of £5,000.[1] Still, no reliance could be placed on the faith of the German, to whose rapacity a more tempting bait was offered by John and the French monarch. On condition that he would detain Richard in captivity, they promised to secure to him a larger sum than had been fixed for the king's ransom, or to pay him at the rate of £20,000 for every month of imprisonment. Henry could not resist so tempting an offer. He had even the effrontery to communicate it to Richard; but the German princes, who had become sureties for the release of the English monarch, upbraided their emperor with his venality, and compelled him to relinquish his prey. More than 70,000 marks were received on the spot, and hostages given for the payment of the remainder.

The king hastily descended the Rhine as far as Cologne, the archbishop of which city conducted him to the port of Antwerp. Here he embarked on board his own fleet. Four days were consumed in the intricate navigation of the river; during five more he was detained by contrary winds in the harbour of Swine, opposite to the isle of Cadsand; at length he landed at Sandwich amidst the acclamations of his subjects, after an absence of more than four years.

Though Richard now breathed the air of liberty, his heart could not be at ease till he had chastised the perfidy of the French monarch. Two short months were all that he could spare to his English subjects; and these were employed, not in repairing the evils caused by his absence but in devising means to extort more money from those who had been already impoverished by the amount of his ransom. In England he had no longer an enemy: John's castles of Marlborough, Lancaster, and St. Michael's had previously yielded to the king's officers; and those of Tickhill and Nottingham surrendered as soon as his return had been ascertained. In Nottingham was held a great council of the realm, consisting of fifteen spiritual and temporal peers, with Eleanor, the queen mother. On the first day Richard took from several individuals the offices which they held under the crown, and sold them to the best bidder. The terms which he proposed were the payment of a considerable fine in the first instance, and an annual rent for the future.

[1] This extraordinary transaction is related on the best authority, that of Hoveden, whose testimony seems to be confirmed by the fact that, on Henry's death, Richard was summoned, like any other of the princes of the empire, to vote for a king of the Romans. He sent deputies, but wisely resolved not to trust his person in Germany a second time. It is, however, possible that he may have been summoned as king of Provence.

The next day he accused of treason his brother John, and the confidential adviser of that prince, Hugh, bishop of Coventry. They were ordered to appear and plead to the charge within forty days, under the following penalties. The prelate, inasmuch as he was a sheriff, was to be at the king's mercy; inasmuch as he was a bishop, to be judged by the church. John was to be outlawed, and to forfeit all his lands, goods, and chattels. Neither of them obeyed the summons, though it was thrice repeated at the distance of forty days; and then, as John held lands in Normandy, and was actually in France, three peers hastened to the court of his sovereign lord, the French king, to repeat the accusation, and to demand judgment against him for contumacy. On the third day of the council a tax of two shillings was imposed on every caracute of land; and the military tenants of the crown were required to accompany the king into Normandy after the rate of one-third of the service to which they were bound by their tenures. The last day was employed in discussing the extraordinary question whether it was necessary that the king should be crowned again. In opposition to his opinion it was decided in the affirmative; and the ceremony was performed at Winchester by Hubert, archbishop of Canterbury.

RICHARD IN NORMANDY

Richard now hastened to join his army at Portsmouth. The wind was adverse, but his impatience scorned the advice and warning of the mariners. He set sail: the night proved dark and tempestuous; and the next morning he was happy to escape from the danger by returning into the harbour. After a tedious delay of a fortnight he reached Normandy, and on his landing was met by his brother John. That prince, whose pusillanimity was equal to his ambition, implored on his knees the forgiveness of a sovereign whom he had so cruelly offended. But he had secured a powerful intercessor in the queen mother; at whose request Richard received him into favour, though he sternly refused to restore to him either his lands or his castles.

It would weary the patience of the reader to lead him through a long and languid detail of military actions which have ceased to be interesting. The finances of Philip, as well as those of Richard, were exhausted; and both kings were compelled to conduct their operations on too petty a scale to produce important results. From mere lassitude and impotence they often consented to an armistice; and as often, on pretence of some real or imaginary offence, broke their word and rushed again to arms. At each repetition their passions grew more inflamed; the spirit of retaliation urged them to new cruelties; and at last each party frequently put out the eyes instead of accepting the ransom of their prisoners.[1] Yet so equally balanced were their powers of mischief that, after six years of desultory and sanguinary warfare, it would have been difficult to determine whose fortune had preponderated.

The most brilliant action during the contest was fought between Gisors and Courcelles. Philip had marched from Mantes with three hundred knights, their esquires, and a large body of cavalry. It was his intention to raise the siege of Courcelles; but Courcelles had already surrendered, and he was met by Richard on the road to Gisors. After a sharp engagement, the French fled to that fortress; the bridge broke under the weight of the fugitives; and

[1] Philip had proposed that the quarrel between them should be decided by five champions on each side. Richard sarcastically answered that he could have no objection, if the king of France and himself were to be two of the number.

the king, with twenty knights, all in armour, was precipitated into the river Epte. The rest perished. Philip was extricated with difficulty, and owed his safety to the devotion of his followers, who gallantly turned on the pursuers, and renewed the battle till all were either taken or slain. Forty barons, one hundred knights, and a hundred and forty chargers, covered with armour, were the reward of the victors. Richard communicated the news to his friends in England, and boasted with scornful complacency that he had made the king of France drink of the waters of the Epte.

Before this the fortune of war had supplied him with a still more pleasing opportunity of gratifying his resentment. The bishop of Beauvais, under the pretence that he had to support the character of a count as well as a bishop, had indulged his martial disposition, fought at the head of his retainers, and acquired the reputation of a bold and fortunate warrior. It chanced, however, that in a skirmish under the walls of Beauvais he was taken by Mercader, the commander of the king's mercenaries. A more acceptable present could not have been offered to Richard. It was to the influence of this prelate, then the French envoy to the court of the emperor Henry, that the English prince attributed the most galling of the indignities which he was compelled to bear in his captivity—that of being put in chains like a criminal.

The bishop was immediately thrown into a dungeon in the castle of Rouen, and loaded with fetters of iron as heavy as his strength could support. In despair of softening the king, he had recourse to the authority of the pontiff, from whom he received a severe but merited reproof. He had, said Celestine, put on the helmet instead of the mitre, and neglected the duties of his station to mix in the fray of battle. And, what added to his offence, he had fought against the champion of the cross, who sought only to recover his own, and in favour of a recreant prince who in violation of his oath had invaded the property of another. Such misconduct rendered him unworthy of the protection of the church or the interposition of the holy see. He might intercede for him as a friend; he could not employ authority as a pontiff. Richard soon afterwards received a letter in which Celestine desired him to pity "his dear son, the bishop of Beauvais"; and in return sent to the pontiff that prelate's coat of mail, with the following scroll attached to it: "Look if this be the coat of thy son or not." "No," replied the pope, with a smile, "it is the coat of a son of Mars. Let Mars deliver him, if he can." Even the king's necessities could not subdue his resentment. He refused a ransom of 10,000 marks; nor did the bishop of Beauvais recover his liberty till Richard was laid in the grave.[d]

ENGLAND FROM 1194 TO 1198

On the 12th of May, 1194, Richard crossed the Channel to Barfleur and, says Stubbs,[g] "England saw his face no more, heavily as from time to time she felt the pressure of his hand." For the four following years the kingdom was governed by Hubert Walter, archbishop of Canterbury, who held the office of justiciar and the position of papal legate. Hubert was an able administrator and a successful financier, trained by his uncle, Glanville, in the school of Henry II. The measures which marked his justiciarship were practically a carrying out of the policy of the first Plantagenet. Himself an Englishman, Hubert conscientiously tried to alleviate the condition of the people, rather than oppress them; but the constant demands of Richard for gold rendered his task a weighty one. But his skill made possible a more equable

distribution of the burden, and those who could bear it probably had to pay more nearly their just share. The sum of £1,100,000, which he is said to have sent to his royal master in the space of four years, is evidence enough of this, for such a sum could never have been obtained from the nation had not the barons and lesser nobility contributed more largely than they had been wont to do. One thing Hubert must be credited with, the importance of which has often been lost sight of in viewing the justiciar as a mere "money-getter"—he did more than any man up to his time to teach the people the habits of self-government. The election of juries to assess taxes, the election of the grand jury for the assizes, the choice of representative knights of the shires for the transaction of judicial work—all these, and more, Hubert taught the people. "The whole working of elective and representative institutions," says Stubbs, *a* "gained greatly under his management—he educated the people against the better time to come."*a*

To exactions so frequent and so vexatious as those demanded by Richard for carrying on his campaigns on the Continent men did not submit without murmuring; and a factious demagogue in the city of London improved the opportunity to direct the public discontent against the higher classes in society. William Fitzosbert, or Longbeard, equally distinguished by the length of his beard and the vehemence of his eloquence, professed himself "the advocate of the people," but at the same time was careful to flatter the wishes of the prince. He did not deny that the war was just and necessary, or that the nation was bound to furnish supplies to the sovereign; but he contended that the rich and powerful among the citizens contrived means to shift the burden from their own shoulders, and to impose it on those who were the least able to bear it. He crossed the sea to lay his sentiments before the king, by whom he was not unfavourably received; returned in haste to London, and by inflammatory harangues from St. Paul's cross threw the whole city into a ferment. Associations were formed; fifty-two thousand persons bound themselves to obey the orders of their "advocate"; and the more wealthy inhabitants trembled for their lives or fortunes. Archbishop Hubert thought it his duty to oppose the demagogue; and in a meeting of the citizens, by his mild and persuasive eloquence, induced them to give him hostages as securities that they would keep the king's peace.

Fitzosbert now saw the storm that was gathering. With an axe he clove the head of the officer sent to arrest him, and fleeing to the church of St. Mary le Bow fortified the tower against his opponents. But the people, separated from their leader, remained quiet; on the fourth day, the church, by design or accident, was set on fire, and Fitzosbert, as he attempted to escape in the confusion, was stabbed in the body by the son of the officer whom he had murdered. The wound did not produce instant death; he was hastily tried, condemned, dragged at the tail of a horse to "the elms" at Tyburn, and hanged in chains with nine of his followers. His friends pronounced him a martyr; and a report was spread that miracles had been wrought at his grave. Some examples of severity dispersed the enthusiasts that collected around it; and in a few weeks the doctrines and the name of Fitzosbert were forgotten. His fate, however, left in the estimation of many a foul blot on the character of Hubert, for during the contest the right of sanctuary had been violated, and that by the order of him whose duty it was to maintain the immunities of the church. This with his other demerits, real or alleged, was urged by his enemies on the attention of the pontiff, who in letters both to the king and the archbishop insisted that Hubert should relinquish those secular offices which he held, and should confine himself to his archiepiscopal

duties. He had once already tendered his resignation, and had been induced to withdraw it. Now it was tendered a second time, and reluctantly accepted.[1] The celebrated Geoffrey Fitzpeter was appointed his successor.

Richard had the satisfaction of surviving his two great persecutors, the duke of Austria and the emperor of Germany. To save the lives of his hostages he had sent to the former, according to a preceding agreement, the princess of Cyprus, and his niece, the maid of Brittany. Before they arrived Leopold was dead (1195). He had crushed his foot by a fall from his horse: a mortification ensued; and on his death-bed, to obtain the benefit of absolution, he consented to release the hostages, and to order the restitution of the money which he had extorted from the English monarch.[2] Henry, for a while at least, enjoyed the fruit of his dishonesty. With Richard's ransom he raised a powerful army to prosecute his claim on the kingdom of Sicily. A torrent of Germans, pouring from the Alps into Italy, overran Apulia and Campania; and the Sicilians, to escape the ravages of a barbarous enemy, submitted by treaty to his authority.

But the perfidious emperor laughed at the obligation of his word; put out the eyes of the son of Tancred (the father was dead); threw the queen Sybilla, her daughters, and the principal nobility, into chains; and was followed into Germany by a long train of captives, and one hundred and fifty horses laden with the most valuable spoils of the conquered provinces. But in the second expedition his cruelties excited the empress Constanza to join her countrymen against her husband. Besieged in a castle, he condescended to seek reconciliation, which in a short time was followed by his death. Like Leopold, during life he had despised the dictates of his conscience and the papal excommunication; in death, like him, he acknowledged his injustice, and ordered the ransom of Richard to be restored. It is useless to add that the restitution was easily evaded by his successor.

DEATH AND CHARACTER OF RICHARD

It was Richard's fate to perish in an ignoble quarrel with one of his barons (1199). A treasure had been discovered on the estate of Guiomar, viscount of Limoges, and though a part had been offered to satisfy the king, he demanded the whole. On the refusal of Guiomar, Richard besieged his castle of Chalus, and contemptuously rejected the conditional offer of surrender made by the garrison. It chanced, as he rode round the walls in company with Mercader, that an arrow wounded him in the left shoulder. The signal for assault was immediately given: the castle was taken by storm; and with the exception of Gourdon, the archer who had wounded the king, the captives were ordered to be hanged as robbers who had detained the property of their sovereign. An unskilful surgeon now extracted the head of the arrow; and symptoms of mortification soon warned the king of his approaching dissolution. He sent for his confessor, received the sacraments with sentiments of compunction, and ordering Gourdon into his presence, gave him his lib-

[1 Hubert was probably glad enough to lay down the cares of office. Stubbs *c* thinks that probably the refusal of the assembled barons and bishops in the spring of 1198, to accede to Richard's demands—the second refusal of the sort recorded in all English history—had something to do with his retirement. It was at least the occasion of it.]

[2 How much had been received in all is unknown. A portion was spent in building the walls of Vienna. But 4,000 marks were offered to the hostages at their departure, to take to Richard. They refused the charge, lest, if any part should be lost or stolen during the journey, the king should compel them to make up the deficiency.

erty, with one hundred shillings to take him home. But Mercader secretly detained the unhappy youth, and ordered him to be flayed alive. Richard expired in the forty-second year of his age. His body was buried at Fontevrault at the feet of his father; his lion heart (the epithet had formerly flattered him) he bequeathed to the citizens of Rouen, in gratitude for their loyalty and attachment.[d]

In many respects a striking parallel presents itself between this ancient king of England and Charles XII of Sweden. They were both inordinately desirous of war, and rather generals than kings. Both were rather fond of glory than ambitious of empire. Both of them made and deposed sovereigns. They both carried on their wars at a distance from home. They were both made prisoners by a friend and ally. They were both reduced by an adversary inferior in war, but above them in the arts of rule. After spending their lives in remote adventures, each perished at last near home, in enterprises not suited to the splendour of their former exploits. Both died childless; and both, by the neglect of their affairs and the severity of their government, gave their subjects provocation and encouragement to revive their freedom. In all these respects the two characters were alike; but Richard fell as much short of the Swedish hero in temperance, chastity, and equality of mind as he exceeded him in wit and eloquence. Some of his sayings are the most spirited that we find in that time; and some of his verses remain which, in a barbarous age, might have passed for poetry.[p]

THE STORY OF ROBIN HOOD

"On the 29th day of March," says Hoveden,[i] "Richard, king of England, went to see Clipstone and the forests of Sherwood, which he had never seen before, and they pleased him greatly; after which, on the same day, he returned to Nottingham." Thierry[m] intimates that it was something beyond the charm of woodland scenery that took Richard to Sherwood in this early spring of 1194. The fame of the forest outlaws had, he imagines, presented an object of attraction to Richard's adventurous spirit. If the king of the Crusades and the greenwood king had met, either as friends or foes, the chroniclers would not, in all likelihood, have been silent on the matter. The first distinct mention of Robin Hood is by Fordun,[n] the Scottish historian, who wrote in the fourteenth century. He says: "Then arose among the disinherited the famous brigand Robert Hode, with his accomplices, whom the common people are so fond of celebrating in their games and stage-plays; and whose exploits, chanted by strolling ballad-singers, delight them above all things." Upon these ballads, adapting themselves, generation by generation, to the changes of language, rests the only historical evidence of the individuality of Robin Hood, beyond this mention by Fordun.

A theory has been set up by some enthusiastic interpreters of song and legend, that Robin Hood, and Little John, and many a nameless outlaw, were great heroes who had been defeated, with Simon de Montfort, at the battle of Evesham in 1265. Others make Robin Hood to have been an earl of Huntingdon. He is the Saxon yeoman, Locksley, of Sir Walter Scott. According to Thierry, the whole of the band that ranged the vast woodland districts of Derby, Nottingham, and Yorkshire were the remnants of the old Saxon race, who had lived in this condition of defiance to Norman oppression from the time of Hereward—the same type of generous robbers and redressers of wrongs as the famous Cumberland bandits, Adam Bell, Clym of

[1199 A.D.]

the Clough, and William of Cloudesley. Without entering upon these controversial theories, we accept Robin Hood as a real personage. There may have been a succession of Robin Hoods, during the long term of Norman tyranny; but whoever he was, and in whatever reign he lived, Robin Hood is the representative of the never-ending protest of the people against misrule—a practical protest which set up a rude kind of democratic justice against the manifold atrocities of aristocratic tyranny. It was a contest, no doubt, of robber against robber; but the popular admiration of the hero of the forests was based upon a more enduring principle than the knightly admiration of the hero of the Crusades.

The ballad-singers have outlived the troubadours. The "blind harpers, or such-like tavern minstrels, that give a fit of mirth for a groat, their matters being for the most part stories of the old time, made purposely for the recreation of the common people,"[r]—these touched the largest sympathies of yeoman and labourer, even when recitals of heavy wrongs and terrible redress were "stories of the old time." For they sang of one who took the goods of the rich baron to bestow them upon the lowly serf, and defied the horrible penalties of the forest laws, whilst he killed his venison in spite of earl and sheriff. The great body of the people were a suffering race long after the difference in suffering between Saxon and Norman had passed away. The Normans, indeed, brought into England a contempt for the labouring people, the serfs and villeins (by whatever special name called), which did not exist in any such degree before the Conquest. The peasant was, under the Norman rulers, in every respect in bondage. His foreign master plundered him and held him in contempt. His foreign king taxed him by the most odious tallage, whenever a penny was put by after the necessities of life and the exactions of the lord were supplied. The humblest cabin and the coarsest fare were thought almost too good for the villein. "Why should villeins eat beef or any dainty food?" asks one of the Norman jongleurs. These charitable poets give us a pithy proverb:

Il fait à Dieu honte
Qui villain haut monte.
(He shames God who raises a villein.)

Thus the privations of the peasantry, and the insults, still harder to endure, went on amidst a smouldering hatred, till the great outbreak of the time of Richard II. In such compositions as the Robin Hood ballads the detestation of the oppressors was long kept alive. How thoroughly artificial and extravagant are the lyrics and romances of chivalry compared with these songs of the rustics! Of Richard the Crusader the least extraordinary feat is that he tore out the heart of a hungry lion, which the emperor of Germany introduced into the royal prisoner's dungeon. But when these minstrels record, not at all implying anything to Richard's disadvantage, that he gaily supped upon the flesh of a young and fat Saracen, having a longing for pork which could not be gratified; and that he caused a Saracen's head to be served up to the ambassadors of Saladin—we feel how this "specimen of what crusaders were supposed capable of performing, although totally fabulous, shows," says Sir Walter Scott, "the idea which the minstrels conceived of such a character, when carried to the highest and most laudable degree of perfection." On the other hand, having put aside the exaggerations of the Robin Hood ballads, we feel that we are in the natural regions of poetry, surrounded by adventures that might have been real, and by men that have human hearts in their bosoms, when we read the stories of "the gentlest thief that ever was." Fuller,[s] who

places Robin amongst his "Worthies," says: "Know, reader, he is entered on our catalogue not for his thievery but for his gentleness." In the most popular poetry of what we call the rude ages, the outlaw had the same attributes of bravery and generosity with which the character of Richard the Lion-Hearted has been invested; without exhibiting those ferocious traits which belonged to the chivalric worship of mere brute courage and blind fanaticism. The popular notion of a hero is the more refined one, although Robin be merely "a good yeoman":

> So curteyse an outlawe as he was one
> Was never none yfounde.

ENGLISH SOCIAL LIFE IN RICHARD'S TIME

In spite of the tyrannous laws which banded men together in the forests, and the oppressions which invested robbers with the character of redressers of wrong, the evils of society had some mitigations. The small agricultural tenants of the feudal lord; the socmen, who were allowed allotments for defined contributions of labour; and even the serfs, who were wholly dependent upon one master, without a choice of other service—these had some compensating circumstances, amidst a great deal of injustice and a habit of life which we now regard as miserable. The duties of these, as well as of every other working member of the community, were in great measure defined. Industry was spared many of those evils of competition which are almost inseparable from the struggles of modern society. The capitalist was the Jew; but his mode of dealing suited only unthrifty abbots and plundering barons; for when the borrower came into the gripe of the Israelite, bond was heaped upon bond, so that we have a record how a debt of £200 became, with accumulated interest, £880 in four years. The yeoman and the burgess sold as fast as they produced, and turned the penny as soon as possible, without the desire or the ability to speculate upon the rise or fall of commodities.

The military training of all classes gave a sort of distinction even to the race of villeins, and kept them in healthful excitement. The universal feeling of devotion, and of obedience to one dominant church, lifted their minds out of the mere material cares of life. They were ignorant, in our sense of ignorance. Their religious observances carry with them an air of much that is ridiculous and debasing. But they were not debased by the undoubting earnestness with which they confided in their spiritual leaders. The distinctions of rank were so clearly defined that no one aspired to belong to a station above him, or to affect to be what he was not. The peasantry had their holidays and rustic games, on which neither the lord nor the priest looked unkindly.

The people of the towns had their indoor amusements, of which gambling was the most attractive to high and low. They had chess; but the rattle of the dice was far more seductive than the marshalling of bishop and knight. The passion of playing for money was so universal that, in the crusade, in which all ranks of men were engaged, the kings of England and France made the most stringent regulations to keep gambling within limits. No man in the army was to play at any kind of game for money, with the exception of knights and the clergy; and no knight or clerk was to lose more than twenty shillings in any one day. The men-at-arms, and "other of the lower orders," as the record runs, who should be found playing of themselves—that is, without their masters looking on and permitting—were to be whipped; and, if mariners,

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were to be plunged into the sea on three successive mornings, "after the usage of sailors." These regulations were to prevent the quarrels which were the natural consequence of gambling, at this period and in most other periods when force stood in the place of argument. We find in an old record that "John, son of King Henry, and Fulco Guarine fell at variance at chess; and John brake Fulco's head with the chess-board, and then Fulco gave him such a blow that he had almost killed him."

In the smooth garden lawns of the towns, and on the village green, the favourite game of the sixteenth century was known in the twelfth or thirteenth; for many "a marvellous good neighbour, in sooth, and a very good bowler" of the days of Elizabeth practised the art as it was practised, with little variation, in the days of John. The rougher games of the people were a supplementary part of their military training. Wrestling was the national pastime, from London to the Land's End, from the west to the north. The sturdy yeomen wrestled for prizes—a ram or a bull, a red gold ring or a pipe of wine. One of the Robin Hood ballads says:

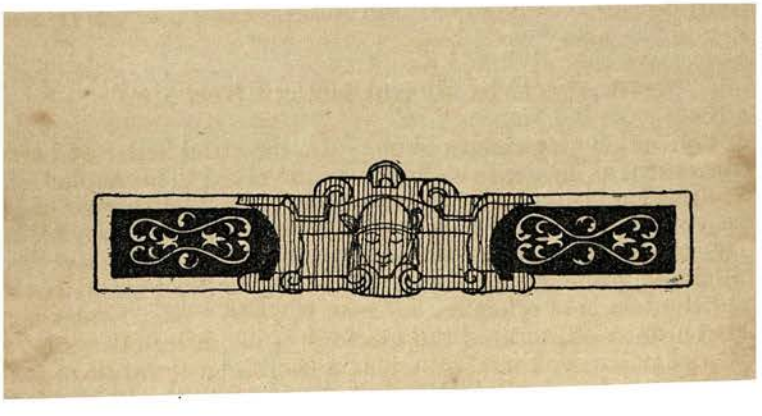
> What man beareth him best, ywis,
> The prize shall bear away.

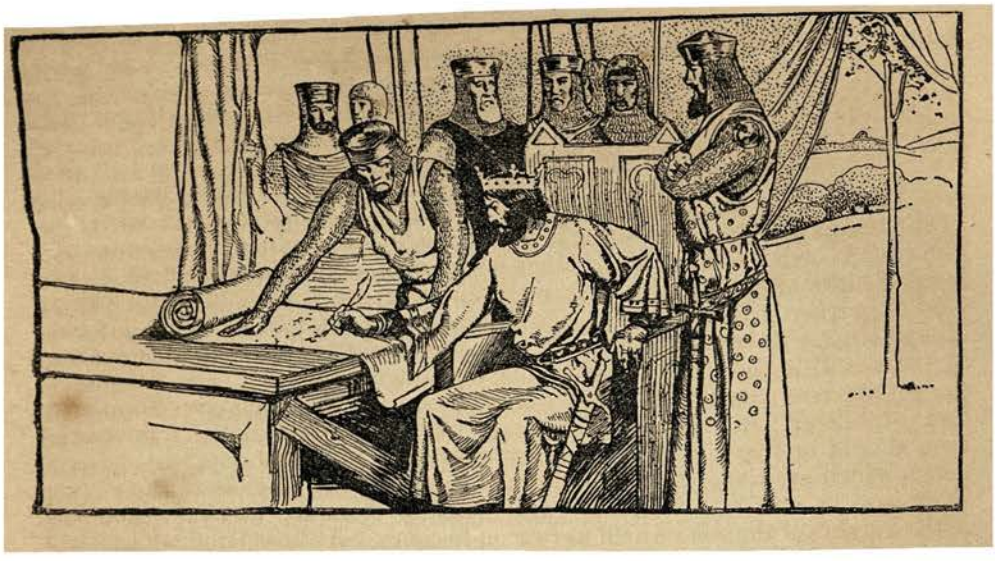
The quarter-staff was the rustic weapon of the west; but the Tanner of Nottingham, whose "staff of oak was eight foot and a half," and Robin Hood had a bout in Sherwood, long celebrated in song and picture. The sword dance of the Saxons came down to their successors, and held its honoured place among popular sports long after the Conquest. The acrobat, who went about to market and fair, was the genuine descendant of the Saxon gleeman, who made knives and balls circle through his hands as adroitly as the modern conjurer. The Anglo-Norman juggler balanced his wheel and his sword; and the "musical girls," whose attractions Richard of Devizes[o] denounces, tumbled before knight and peasant, as the daughter of Herodias "tumbled before Herod." The bearward was not unknown in the towns with his monkey and his drum; and to the country revel came the tabourer and the bagpiper, the dancers and the minstrel.

The minstrel was the privileged wanderer. History says that Longchamp, the chancellor, was the chief instrument of the release of Richard from his dungeon in the Tyrol; but romance will not surrender to chancellor or bishop the fame of Blondel, who, searching about for his beloved master, "became acquainted with them of the castle, as minstrels do easily win acquaintance anywhere." The English minstrels, we may suppose, did not sing such refined verses as those of which Blondel sang one verse before Richard's prison window, and to which the king replied with the second verse. Chester fair, in the time of John, was a great resort of vagabonds; for by the charter of the city no one could be there apprehended for any theft or misdeed except it were committed in the fair. Ranulph, earl of Chester, was a prisoner in Rhuddlan castle; and Lord de Lacy, the constable of Chester, by the help of "the minstrels of all sorts that met at Chester fair, by the allurement of their music got together a vast number of such loose people as, by reason of the before-specified privilege, were then in that city." The minstrels and the loose people alarmed the warders of the Welsh castle, and released the earl. We have said enough to show that even in the Norman times of unequal government the free spirit of the people broke forth in that mingled temper of frolic and kindness which has ever been their characteristic, and that under the worst rulers there was no very enduring time to be chronicled when this was not "Merrie England."[c]

BEGINNINGS OF PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION

It is in the reign of Richard I that we begin to see the first faint glimmerings of parliamentary representation. The one object of the absentee king was to screw all the money that he could out of the kingdom for which he cared not. The object of his wise ministers, of Archbishop Hubert among the first, was to gain the greatest amount of money for their master, with the least amount of oppression towards the nation. Under Hubert's administration chosen bodies of knights, or other lawful men, acting in characters which become more and more distinctly representative, were summoned for every kind of purpose. How far they were nominated, how far freely elected, is not always clear. It seems most likely that in one stage they were nominated by the sheriff in the county court, while at a later stage they were chosen by the county court itself. In other words, the principle of representation was first established; and then the next stage naturally was that the representatives should be freely chosen. Summoned bodies of knights appear in characters which are the forerunners of grand jurors and of justices of the peace. They appear also in a character which makes them distinctly forerunners of the knights of the shire which were soon to come. A chosen body of knights have to assess the imposts on each shire. From assessing the taxes the next stage was to vote or to refuse them. In 1213 the sheriffs are called on to summon four discreet men from each shire, to come and speak with the king about the affairs of the realm. When we have reached this stage we have come very near to a parliament, name and thing.*f*





CHAPTER IX

KING JOHN AND MAGNA CHARTA

[1199–1216 A.D.]

O, now doth Death line his dead chaps with steel;
The swords of soldiers are his teeth and fangs;
And now he feasts, mousing the flesh of men,
In undetermined differences of kings.

SHAKESPEARE (*King John, Act II, Scene I*).

JOHN SUCCEEDS TO THE THRONE (1199 A.D.)

RICHARD had left no legitimate issue.[1] In the strict order of hereditary succession, the crown at his death should have devolved to his nephew Arthur, the son of Geoffrey and duke of Brittany, a boy in the twelfth year of his age. Formerly the young prince had been declared heir-apparent; but his mother Constance by her indiscretion and caprice contrived to alienate the mind of his uncle Richard, while the aged and politic Eleanor laboured with assiduity to draw closer the bonds of affection between her two sons. Under her guidance, John had almost obliterated the memory of his former treasons, and in reward of his fidelity had obtained from his brother the restoration of his lands. When Richard lay on his death-bed, John was present; the claim of Arthur, though formerly admitted by the king, was forgotten; and the expiring monarch is said to have declared his brother successor to his throne and heir to one-third of his property. John immediately received the homage of the knights present, hastened to take possession of Chinon, where Richard had deposited his treasures, and proceeded thence into Touraine, Maine, and Anjou, the ancient patrimony of the Plantagenets.

[1] He had a natural son called Philip, who the same year murdered the viscount of Limoges because he had been the occasion of Richard's death.

To his disappointment, the natives declared in favour of his nephew Arthur, and were supported in that declaration by the promise of support from the king of France, to whom Constance had intrusted the person and the interests of her son. John had no time to waste in the reduction of these provinces; but before his departure he wreaked his vengeance on the two capitals, Le Mans and Angers. Both were sacked. From Angers he rode with expedition into Normandy, where his friends had secured every voice in his favour; and at Rouen he received the ducal coronet and sword from the hands of the archbishop. In Poitou and Aquitaine he was equally fortunate. In these provinces his mother Eleanor did not hesitate to transfer to her son the homage, fealty, and services of the natives, who submitted without a murmur to their new master.

KING JOHN
(1167–1216)

In England not only the form but much of the spirit of an elective monarchy had been hitherto retained. Since the Conquest five kings had ascended the throne, and four of these rested their principal title on the choice of the people. After the death of Richard men were divided between the rival claims of John and of Arthur. On the arrival of Archbishop Hubert and William Marshal from Normandy, the justiciar, Fitzpeter, had commanded all freemen to swear allegiance to "Earl John";[1] but they were alarmed by the hesitation which seemed to prevail among the prelates and barons. A great council was, therefore, held at Northampton; threats and promises were artfully employed, and at last a unanimous resolution was procured to swear fealty to John, "duke of Normandy," on the condition that he should respect the present rights of each individual.

On this intelligence he repaired to England, and was crowned with the usual solemnity at Westminster on May 25. The primate opened the ceremony with a remarkable speech, intended to justify the exclusion of Arthur. The crown, he observed, was not the property of any particular person. It was the gift of the nation, which chose, generally from the members of the reigning family, the prince who appeared the most deserving of royalty in the existing circumstances. They had that day assembled to exercise this important duty, and had chosen for their sovereign John, duke of Normandy, brother to the deceased monarch. To these principles John gave a tacit assent; and, after a solemn admonition from the primate, took the accustomed oath.[2]

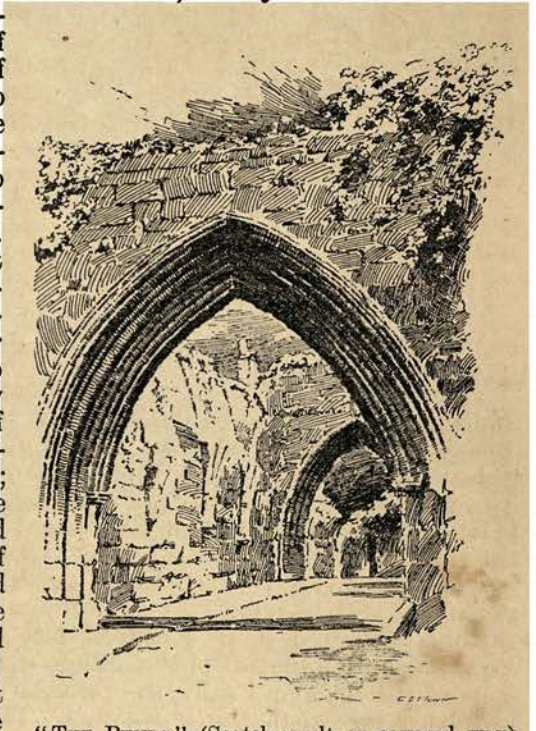
[1] Our ancient authorities observe the same rule in speaking of John before his accession as they did of Richard. He is Earl John till he receives the ducal coronet; then Duke John till his coronation, after which he is King John.

[2] In the preamble, however, to a law which was published a few days later (June 7th) at Northampton, he was careful to unite both his titles. God had raised him to the throne, which belonged to him by hereditary right, through the unanimous consent and favour of the clergy and people.

[1199-1200 A.D.]

The French kings had long cast a wistful eye towards the provinces possessed by the English monarchs in France. If the ambition of Philip shrank before the superior prowess of Richard, it expanded again at the accession of his weak and pusillanimous brother. With Arthur in his possession, he determined to fight his own battles, while he pretended to support the cause of an injured orphan; and, having conferred the sword of knighthood on the young prince, he traversed Normandy, burned Evreux, and placed garrisons in the fortresses of Anjou, Maine, and Touraine. An uninteresting war ensued; hostilities, at the solicitation of the cardinal Peter of Capua, were suspended by armistice; and the armistice terminated in a peace, which did little honour to either of the two monarchs. Philip sacrificed the interests of Arthur, acknowledged John for the rightful heir to his late brother, and compelled the young prince to do homage to his uncle for the duchy of Brittany.

But the English king had purchased this advantage by the payment of 20,000 marks as the "relief" for his succession, and by the transfer of the county of Evreux and several valuable fiefs to Louis, the son of Philip, as the marriage portion of his niece, Blanche of Castile, who was immediately married to the French prince. That these transactions might be valid, according to the principles of the feudal jurisprudence, a curious farce was enacted. John had never performed that homage which was requisite to entitle a vassal to the legal possession, and consequently to the power of disposing of his estates. Philip therefore, though he was already master by conquest of several of the places ceded by the treaty, restored them to the English king; who first did homage and swore fealty to his sovereign lord, and then, being thus lawfully seized of his foreign dominions, transferred the stipulated portions with the proper ceremonies to Philip and Louis.



"THE PENDS" (Scotch vault or covered way)

(Part of cathedral erected between 1159 and 1318, in St. Andrews, Scotland)

Had John possessed the spirit and enterprise of Richard, he might have obtained very different terms from Philip, who at that moment was engaged in a warm and dangerous controversy with the pontiff Innocent III. Several years before, while Richard was in captivity, he had solicited the hand of Ingeborg, the beautiful sister of the king of Denmark. Ingeborg was conducted to Amiens; the ceremony of her marriage was immediately followed by that of her coronation; and the next morning Philip, to the astonishment of the world, required her attendants to convey her back to her brother. On their refusal, she was sent to a convent;

and a divorce was pronounced by the archbishop of Rheims under the pretence of affinity, because she was cousin to Philip's deceased wife. The king, though his offers were contemptuously rejected by several princesses, at length found a woman who dared to trust to his honour, in Agnes, the daughter of the duke of Meran. They were married, and continued to cohabit, in defiance of the prohibition of Pope Celestine, who had annulled the sentence of the archbishop.

To Celestine succeeded Innocent, a pontiff who, to the vigour of youth and an unsullied purity of character, added the most lofty notions of the papal authority. At the request of the king of Denmark he espoused the cause of Ingeborg; and his legate, the cardinal Peter, laid the dominions of Philip under an interdict. This was to punish the innocent for the guilty; but it had the effect of subduing that obstinacy which had been proof against the considerations of honour and conscience. Unable to enforce disobedience to the interdict, and assailed by the clamours of his subjects, Philip consented to dismiss Agnes, to treat Ingeborg as queen, and to submit to the revision of the original sentence. In the council of Soissons the beauty and tears of the Danish princess pleaded forcibly in her favour; the objections of her opponents were easily refuted; and the legate had prepared to pronounce judgment, when Philip informed him that he acknowledged the validity of the marriage. Ingeborg derived at the time little benefit from her victory. With the title of queen she was confined in a fortress, and strictly debarred from the society of any but her own women. After some years they were reconciled.

JOHN'S SECOND MARRIAGE

The failure of Philip in this attempt to sport with the matrimonial contract did not deter John from following his example. Twelve years had elapsed since his marriage with Hadwisa, or Johanna, the heiress to the earldom of Gloucester. Interest, not affection, had brought about their union; but her estates were of little consequence to the king of England; and a sentence of divorce on the usual plea of consanguinity was readily granted by the archbishop of Bordeaux. John immediately sent ambassadors to Lisbon to demand the princess of Portugal; but before he could receive an answer, he saw by accident Isabella, daughter to Ademar, count of Angoulême, a young lady who in her early years had been publicly promised and privately espoused to Hugh, count of La Marche.[1] The king was captivated by her beauty; the glare of a crown seduced the faith of the father and his daughter; and the unexpected marriage of Isabella and John deprived the princess of Portugal of a husband, the count de la Marche of a wife. The complaints of the one and the threats of the other were equally disregarded. John conducted his bride in triumph to England, and was crowned with her at Westminster by the primate. The next year the same ceremony was repeated at Canterbury, on the festival of Easter.

It is from this inauspicious marriage that we must date the decline of the Plantagenet family. When Isabella was seduced from her betrothed, John was lord of the French coast from the borders of Flanders to the foot of the Pyrenees; in three years he had irrevocably lost the best portion of

[1] This contract would, according to the doctrine of the time, bind Hugh but not Isabella, till it should be confirmed by her after she came to the age of puberty. This, it appears, she had not done, and Ademar contrived to get her out of the hands of the brother of Hugh, to whose care she had been intrusted.

[1202 A.D.]

this valuable territory, the provinces which his predecessors had inherited from William of Normandy and Fulk of Anjou. The sword of the count de la Marche was indeed too feeble to inflict any serious injury. The arrival of John soon restrained his predatory incursions; and a summons to appear with his partisans in the king's court warned him to look round for protection. But he appealed to the justice of Philip, their common lord; nor was that prince sorry that the tergiversation of John afforded him a pretext for humbling so powerful a vassal. The provisions of the late treaty were instantly forgotten. Philip received the homage of Arthur (1202) for Brittany, Anjou, Maine, and Touraine; the discontented barons hastened to join his banner; fortress after fortress surrendered to the confederates; and the heart of John sank in despondency, when an unexpected event arrested the progress of his enemies, and gave him a temporary superiority.

Eleanor, the queen mother, was lodged in the castle of Mirebeau, in Poitou. Its garrison was as weak as its defences were contemptible; and the glory of making her a prisoner was allotted to the young Arthur, her grandson. Accompanied by the barons of the province, he invested Mirebeau. The gates were easily forced; but the queen, retiring into the tower, refused to capitulate, and found means to acquaint her son with her danger. John, roused from his apathy, flew to her relief, routed the enemy who came out to oppose him, entered the walls together with the fugitives, and after a sharp conflict compelled the survivors to ask for quarter. Among the captives was Arthur, whom he placed under a strong guard in the castle of Falaise. Philip, having burned the city of Tours, returned to Paris.

THE FATE OF ARTHUR AND LOSS OF NORMANDY

This sudden alteration of fortune had placed in the king's hands the fate of his rival. If the voice of humanity pleaded loudly in favour of a nephew and orphan, an erroneous policy objected the danger of permitting a prince to live, who, as he now claimed, might on some future occasion obtain the crown. It does not, however, appear that John fixed at first on the dreadful expedient of assassination. He visited his captive, exhorted him to desist from his pretensions, and represented the folly of trusting to the friendship of the king of France, the natural enemy of his family. To this admonition the high-spirited youth answered that he would resign his claim only with his breath; and that the crown of England, together with the French provinces, belonged to himself in right of his father. John retired pensive and discontented; Arthur was transferred to the castle of Rouen, and confined in a dungeon of the new tower. Within a few months he had disappeared.

If the manner of his death could have borne investigation, John for his own honour would have made it public. His silence proves that the young prince was murdered. Report ascribed his fate to the dagger of his uncle; but the king of England could surely have hired an assassin without actually dipping his hands in the blood of a nephew.[1] His niece Eleanor, the sister of Arthur, and commonly called the Maid of Brittany, was sent to England, and placed under rigorous but honourable confinement, that she might not, by marriage with a foreign prince, raise up a new competitor for the succession of her father. After a short pause the whispers of suspicion were con-

[1] Guillaume le Breton says he took Arthur into a boat, stabbed him twice with his own hands, and threw the dead body into the river about three miles from the castle.

verted into a conviction of the king's guilt. The Bretons immediately assembled, swore to be revenged on the murderer, and proceeded to settle the succession to the dukedom. Guy of Thouars entered the meeting, carrying in his arms a child of the name of Alice, his daughter by Constance, whom he had married after the death of her first husband. The princess was acknowledged without prejudice to the right of Eleanor, now in the custody of her uncle; and Guy was appointed her guardian, and governor of the duchy.

The bishop of Rennes then hastened to Paris to accuse the English king of the murder; and Philip gladly summoned him to prove his innocence in the presence of the French peers. John, however, refused; and the court pronounced judgment, that "whereas John, duke of Normandy, in violation of his oath to Philip his lord, had murdered the son of his elder brother, a homager of the crown of France and near kinsman to the king, and had perpetrated the crime within the seigniory of France, he was found guilty of felony and treason, and was therefore adjudged to forfeit all the lands which he held by homage."

To execute this sentence, Philip on the one side and the Bretons on the other entered John's dominions. After the reduction of several minor fortresses, it was resolved to besiege château Gaillard, a strong castle built by the late king on a rock hanging over the Seine. John, on the disappearance of his nephew, had come over to England, was crowned a second time by Archbishop Hubert at Canterbury, and immediately returned to Normandy. Though he assembled a numerous army, he seemed ashamed to show his face to the enemy; and the task of relieving the besieged devolved on his general, the earl of Pembroke. A bridge of boats, which had been thrown across the river, effectually prevented the arrival of supplies to the garrison.

To break through this obstacle, the earl planned a combined attack by land and water. He reached the French camp in the night at the hour appointed, and by the vigour of his assault threw the whole army into confusion. But the flotilla of seventy small vessels, which had been compelled to row against the wind and the current, arrived only in the morning in time to witness the repulse of the earl, and retired hastily from the threatened attack of a victorious enemy. This was the last effort which the king made in defence of his foreign possessions. If we may believe the accounts which have been transmitted to us, he sought to drown the voice of his conscience in scenes of merriment and debauchery. At Rouen, amidst a gay and voluptuous court, he affected to laugh at the progress of the confederates, and openly boasted that in one day he would teach them to regret the success of a whole year. Thus, while his strongest defences were crumbling around him, the infatuated monarch appeared to slumber secure in the lap of pleasure, till the reduction of Radepont, in the vicinity of Rouen, awakened him from his lethargy and induced him to flee with precipitation to England.

Perhaps if it were possible to consult some contemporary historian we might discover the true reason of John's inactivity. He certainly did not acquiesce in his loss with indifference. He complained loudly of the perfidy of his opponents; he claimed the intervention of the pope, to compel Philip by ecclesiastical censures to observe his oaths; and he raised forces and money, both in England and Ireland, to carry on the war. Probably neither his foreign nor his English barons were true to his interests. Many of the former he punished by the forfeiture of their lands in England, and of the latter by exacting from them a seventh of their income and movables. Yet when he had collected a numerous army at Portsmouth, they unanimously informed him by the mouth of Archbishop Hubert that they would not embark.

[1202–1207 A.D.]

At length, after a siege of several months, and when the garrison had been reduced, by the casualties of war and the ravages of famine, to less than two hundred men, the gallant Roger de Lacy surrendered château Gaillard to the king of France. Falaise, a place equally strong, and the bulwark of Lower Normandy, was given up by the treachery of Lupicar, the governor, who with his mercenaries entered into the service of Philip. Still the citizens of Rouen, Arques, and Verneuil, animated by a hereditary hatred of the French, resolved to oppose the invaders, concluded a league for their common defence, and implored by messengers the aid of the king of England. Rouen was soon invested; a refusal of assistance from John threw the citizens into despair; and an offer of conditional submission was made to the French king. It was stipulated that unless a peace should be concluded, or the enemy be driven from the walls within thirty days, Philip should be admitted as immediate lord of Rouen, and the citizens should continue to enjoy their accustomed immunities. Arques and Verneuil accepted the same terms, and in like manner opened their gates on the appointed day. Anjou, Maine, and Touraine followed the example of Normandy; and thus by the guilt, or indolence, or bad fortune of John were these extensive and opulent provinces reannexed to the French crown after a separation of two hundred and ninety-two years.[b]

Much as it may have hurt the pride of the English, the loss of Normandy and the other continental possessions of the English king was an unqualified benefit to the nation. Lord Macaulay puts this fact with great force and clearness.[a] "England's interest was so directly opposed to the interest of her rulers," he writes, "that she had no hope but in their errors and misfortunes. The talents and even the virtues of her first six French kings were a curse to her. The follies and vices of the seventh were her salvation. Just at this juncture France, for the first time since the death of Charlemagne, was governed by a prince of great firmness and ability. On the other hand, England, which, since the battle of Hastings, had been ruled generally by wise statesmen, always by brave soldiers, fell under the dominion of a trifler and a coward. From that moment her prospects brightened. The great-grandsons of those who had fought under William, and the great-grandsons of those who had fought under Harold, began to draw near to each other in friendship. Here commences the history of the English nation."[b]

But if John had neglected to preserve, he seemed resolved to recover his transmarine dominions. In a great council at Winchester it was proposed and resolved that every tenth knight in the kingdom should accompany the king, and serve in Poitou at the expense of the other nine. But though a fleet was prepared, though the day of embarkation was fixed and postponed, though John proceeded to Portsmouth, and actually put to sea, yet so weak was the force which he could muster that he returned to land and abandoned the attempt. For this disappointment he consoled himself during the summer by levying fines on the defaulters; and the next year, having secured the co-operation of Guy, viscount of Thouars, he landed at La Rochelle. The castle of Montauban was invested; and John was able to boast that he had reduced in a few days a fortress which Charlemagne had not taken in seven years. He proceeded to Angers, and once more burned that unfortunate city.

But from this state of exertion his mind relapsed into its usual irresolution and apathy. He raised the siege of Nantes to offer battle to Philip; when the armies came within sight, he proposed a negotiation; and as soon as the negotiation was opened slunk away with his army to La Rochelle.

Philip affected to resent the transaction; but at the earnest solicitation of the pope's legate consented to an armistice for two years. John returned to England, and in a great council obtained the grant of a thirteenth for the defence of the rights of the church and the recovery of his inheritance; but his brother Geoffrey, archbishop of York, refused to submit, excommunicated the king's officers, and fled beyond the sea.

JOHN AND INNOCENT III

This unfortunate contest with the French king was followed by another with the Roman pontiff, differing indeed in its object, but equally disgraceful in its result.[d] The papal chair was in 1201 filled by Innocent III, who, having attained that dignity at the age of thirty-seven years, and being endowed with a lofty and enterprising genius, gave full scope to his ambition, and attempted, perhaps more openly than any of his predecessors, to convert that superiority which was yielded him by all the European princes into a real dominion over them. [The principle of Innocent's assumption of the temporal power was thus expressed by himself: "As God created two luminaries, one superior for the day, and the other inferior for the night, which last owes its splendour entirely to the first, so he has disposed that the regal dignity should be but a reflection of the papal authority, and entirely subordinate to it."]

The hierarchy, protected by the Roman pontiff, had already carried to an enormous height its usurpations upon the civil power; but in order to extend them further, and render them useful to the court of Rome, it was necessary to reduce the ecclesiastics themselves under an absolute monarchy, and to make them entirely dependent on their spiritual leader. For this purpose Innocent first attempted to impose taxes at pleasure upon the clergy, and in the first year of this century, taking advantage of the popular frenzy for crusades, he sent collectors over all Europe, who levied by his authority the fortieth of all ecclesiastical revenues for the relief of the Holy Land, and received the voluntary contributions of the laity to a like amount. The same year Hubert, archbishop of Canterbury, attempted another innovation, favourable to ecclesiastical and papal power. In the king's absence, he summoned by his legatine authority a synod of all the English clergy, contrary to the inhibition of Geoffrey Fitzpeter, the chief justiciar; and no proper censure was ever passed on this encroachment, the first of the kind, upon the royal power. A favourable incident soon happened, which enabled so aspiring a pontiff as Innocent to extend his usurpations on so contemptible a prince as John.

Hubert Walter, the primate, died in 1205; and as the monks or canons of Christ Church, Canterbury, possessed [or claimed to possess] a right of voting in the election of their archbishop, some of the juniors of the order, who lay in wait for that event, met clandestinely the very night of Hubert's death, and without any *congé d'élire* from the king, chose Reginald, their subprior, for the successor, installed him in the archiepiscopal throne before midnight, and, having enjoined him the strictest secrecy, sent him immediately to Rome, in order to solicit the confirmation of his election. The vanity of Reginald prevailed over his prudence; and he no sooner arrived in Flanders than he revealed to everyone the purpose of his journey, which was immediately known in England. The king was enraged at the novelty and temerity of the attempt, in filling so important an office without his knowledge or

consent. The suffragan bishops of Canterbury, who were accustomed to concur in the choice of their primate, were no less displeased at the exclusion given them in this election. The senior monks of Christ Church were injured by the irregular proceedings of their juniors. The juniors themselves, ashamed of their conduct, and disgusted with the levity of Reginald, who had broken his engagements with them, were willing to set aside his election; and all men concurred in the design of remedying the false measure which had been taken.

But as John knew that this affair would be canvassed before a superior tribunal, where the interposition of royal authority of bestowing ecclesiastical benefices was very invidious, where even the cause of suffragan bishops was not so favourable as that of monks, he determined to make the new election entirely unexceptionable. [He had long intended the place for John de Gray, bishop of Norwich, whom, without waiting to hear from Rome, he now caused to be elected and placed in possession of the estates of the see.] The king, to obviate all contests, endeavoured to persuade the suffragan bishops not to insist on their claim of concurring in the election. But those prelates, persevering in their pretensions, sent an agent to maintain their cause before Innocent; while the king and the convent of Christ Church despatched twelve monks of that order to support, before the same tribunal, the election of the bishop of Norwich.

Thus there lay three different claims before the pope, whom all parties allowed to be the supreme arbiter in the contest. The claim of the suffragans, being so opposite to the usual maxims of the papal court, was soon set aside. The election of Reginald was so obviously fraudulent and irregular that there was no possibility of defending it. But Innocent maintained that, though this election was null and invalid, it ought previously to have been declared such by the sovereign pontiff, before the monks could proceed to a new election; and that the choice of the bishop of Norwich was, of course, as uncanonical as that of his competitor. Advantage was therefore taken of this subtlety for introducing a precedent, by which the see of Canterbury, the most important dignity in the church after the papal throne, should ever after be at the disposal of the court of Rome.

While the pope maintained so many fierce contests, in order to wrest from princes the right of granting investitures, and to exclude laymen from all authority in conferring ecclesiastical benefices, he was supported by the united influence of the clergy. But no sooner was this point established in some tolerable degree, than the victorious leader aspired to centre all power in his person. The present controversy about the election to the see of Canterbury afforded Innocent an opportunity of claiming this right; and he failed not to perceive and avail himself of the advantage. He sent for the twelve monks deputed by the convent to maintain the cause of the bishop of Norwich, and commanded them, under the penalty of excommunication, to choose for their primate Cardinal Stephen Langton, an Englishman by birth, but educated in France and connected by his interest and attachments with the see of Rome. In vain did the monks represent that they had received from their convent no authority for this purpose; that an election without a previous writ from the king would be deemed highly irregular; and that they were merely agents for another person, whose rights they had no power or pretence to abandon. None of them had the courage to persevere in this opposition except one; the rest complied with his orders and made the election required of them.

John was inflamed with the utmost rage when he heard of this attempt of the court of Rome, and he immediately vented his passion on the monks

of Christ Church, whom he found inclined to support the election made by their fellows at Rome. He sent two knights of his retinue to expel them the convent and take possession of their revenues. These knights entered the monastery with drawn swords, commanded the prior and the monks to depart the kingdom, and menaced them that in case of disobedience they would instantly burn them with the convent. Innocent, prognosticating from the violence and imprudence of these measures that John would finally sink in the contest, persevered the more vigorously in his pretensions, and exhorted the king not to oppose God and the church any longer, nor to persecute that cause for which the holy martyr St. Thomas had sacrificed his life, and which had exalted him equal to the highest saints in heaven.

THE KINGDOM PLACED UNDER AN INTERDICT

The pope, finding that John was not sufficiently tamed to submission, sent three prelates, the bishops of London, Ely, and Worcester, to intimate that if he persevered in his disobedience the sovereign pontiff would be obliged to lay the kingdom under an interdict. He burst out into the most indecent invectives against the prelates; swore by God's teeth (his usual oath) that if the pope presumed to lay his kingdom under an interdict he would send to him all the bishops and clergy in England, and would confiscate all their estates; and threatened that if thenceforth he caught any Romans in his dominions he would put out their eyes and cut off their noses, in order to set a mark upon them which might distinguish them from all other nations. Amidst all this idle violence, John stood on such bad terms with his nobility that he never dared to assemble the estates of the kingdom, who, in so just a cause, would probably have adhered to any other monarch, and have defended with vigour the liberties of the nation against these palpable usurpations of the court of Rome. Innocent, therefore, perceiving the king's weakness, fulminated at last the sentence of interdict, which he had for some time held suspended over him.

The sentence of interdict was at that time the great instrument of vengeance and policy employed by the court of Rome; was pronounced against sovereigns for the slightest offences; and made the guilt of one person involve the ruin of millions, even in their spiritual and eternal welfare. The execution of it was calculated to operate with irresistible force on the superstitious minds of the people. The nation was of a sudden deprived of all exterior exercise of its religion; the altars were despoiled of their ornaments; the crosses, the relics, the images, the statues of the saints were laid on the ground. The use of bells entirely ceased in all the churches. Mass was celebrated with shut doors, and none but the priests were admitted to that holy institution. The laity partook of no religious rite, except baptism to newborn infants, and the communion to the dying. The dead were not interred in consecrated ground. Marriages were celebrated in the churchyards. Every circumstance carried symptoms of the deepest distress and of the most immediate apprehension of divine vengeance and indignation.

The quarrel between the king and the see of Rome continued for some years; and though many of the clergy, from the fear of punishment, obeyed the orders of John and celebrated divine service, they complied with the utmost reluctance, and were regarded, both by themselves and the people, as men who betrayed their principles and sacrificed their conscience to temporal regards and interests.*f*

[1208–1209 A.D.]

JOHN'S IRISH AND WELSH EXPEDITIONS

During this period John appears to have conducted himself with more vigour and decision than at any other part of his reign. He compromised a difference with the king of Scotland, without any actual warfare. He led a great army into Ireland, which had been distracted by the rivalries and oppressions of the proud barons who had been deputed to its administration since the time of Henry II. The presence of the English king with a powerful force was held as a blessing by the native chiefs and the body of the people. William de Braiose, who had received extensive grants of land at the beginning of John's reign, conscious of his crimes, hurried to France, leaving his wife and son in the hands of John. A brief entry in the chronicle of Florence of Worcester*i* tells their fate: "Matilda de Braiose and William her son were starved to death at Windsor." The two De Lacys, amongst the most oppressive of the Norman aristocracy in Ireland, also fled to France, and subsisted as labourers in the garden of an abbey. After two or three years their rank was discovered by the abbot, and through his intercession they were restored to the king's favour.

Ireland was, before the visit of John, a prey to those lawless outrages which are invariably the result of tyrannous government. Dublin was peopled in a great degree by colonists from Bristol, under a grant from Henry II. On some occasion of country festivity at a place called the wood of Cullen, when many of these citizens were present, a great body of lawless people came down from the Wicklow mountains and massacred three hundred men, women, and children. Some of the English laws had been introduced by Henry II, and his grants of land were according to the feudal tenures. John originated some useful reforms. He divided the portions of the kingdom in his possession into shires, each with its sheriff and other officers, and he coined the first sterling money circulated in Ireland. He left John de Gray, bishop of Norwich, as his chief justiciar, a man of talent and discretion. During the troublous future of England in this reign the sister island was tranquil and prosperous.[1] The expedition to Ireland was followed next year, 1211, by an attempt to repress the incursions of the Welsh. John advanced to the foot of Snowdon, and there received twenty-eight young men as hostages from Llewelyn.*c*

Meanwhile, the danger to which his government stood continually exposed from the discontent of ecclesiastics increased his natural propension to tyranny; and he seems to have ever wantonly disgusted all orders of men, especially his nobles, from whom alone he could reasonably expect support and assistance. He dishonoured their families by his licentious amours; he published edicts prohibiting them from hunting feathered game, and thereby restrained them from their favourite amusement; he ordered all the hedges and fences near his forests to be levelled, that his deer might have more ready access into the fields for pasture; and he continually loaded the nation with arbitrary impositions. Conscious of the general hatred which he had incurred, he required his nobility to give him hostages for security of their allegiance; and they were obliged to put into his hands their sons, nephews, or near relations.

[1 It was during this interval that John is said to have sent a deputation to solicit the friendship and alliance of Muhammed An-Nasir, the Moorish emir in Spain. John, contemporaries say, went so far as to offer to embrace Mohammedanism—a startling enough proposal, but one that may be easily believed of the English king.]

JOHN'S EXCOMMUNICATION AND DEPOSITION

The court of Rome had artfully contrived a gradation of sentences, by which she kept offenders in awe; still afforded them an opportunity of preventing the next anathema by submission; and, in case of their obstinacy, was able to refresh the horror of the people against them by new denunciations of the wrath and vengeance of heaven. As the sentence of interdict had not produced the desired effect on John, Innocent, after keeping the thunder long suspended, gave at last authority to the bishops of London, Ely, and Worcester to fulminate the sentence of excommunication against him. These prelates obeyed.

No sooner was the excommunication known than the effects of it appeared. Geoffrey, archdeacon of Norwich, who was intrusted with a considerable office in the court of exchequer, being informed of it while sitting on the bench, observed to his colleague the danger of serving under an excommunicated king, and he immediately left his chair and departed the court. John gave orders to seize him, to throw him into prison, to cover his head with a great leaden cope; and by this and other severe usage he put an end to his life. The bishops, finding themselves exposed either to the jealousy of the king or hatred of the people, gradually stole out of the kingdom, and at last there remained only three prelates to perform the functions of the episcopal office. Many of the nobility, terrified by John's tyranny, and obnoxious to him on different accounts, imitated the example of the bishops; and most of the others who remained were, with reason, suspected of having secretly entered into a confederacy against him. John was alarmed at his dangerous situation. He desired a conference with Langton at Dover; offered to acknowledge him as primate, to submit to the pope, to restore the exiled clergy, even to pay them a limited sum as a compensation for the rents of their confiscated estates. But Langton, perceiving his advantage, was not satisfied with these concessions: he demanded that full restitution and reparation should be made to all the clergy. The king, who had probably not the power of fulfilling it, finally broke off the conference.

The next gradation of papal sentences was to absolve John's subjects from their oaths of fidelity and allegiance, and to declare everyone excommunicated who had any commerce with him in public or in private, at his table, in his council, or even in private conversation; and this sentence was accordingly, with all imaginable solemnity, pronounced against him. But as John still persevered in his contumacy, there remained nothing but the sentence of deposition, and Innocent determined to dart this last thunderbolt against the refractory monarch. But as a sentence of this kind required an armed force to execute it, the pontiff, casting his eyes around, fixed at last on Philip, king of France, as the person into whose powerful hand he could most properly intrust that weapon, the ultimate resource of his ghostly authority. And he offered the monarch, besides the remission of all his sins and endless spiritual benefits, the property and possession of the kingdom of England as the reward of his labor.

It was the common concern of all princes to oppose these exorbitant pretensions of the Roman pontiff, by which they themselves were rendered vassals, and vassals totally dependent on the papal crown: yet even Philip, the most able monarch of the age, was seduced by present interest, and by the prospect of so tempting a prize, to accept the liberal offer of the pontiff, and thereby to ratify that authority which, if he ever opposed its boundless usur-

[1211-1213 A.D.]

pations, might next day tumble him from the throne. He levied a great army; summoned all vassals of the crown to attend him at Rouen; collected a fleet of seventeen hundred vessels, great and small, in the seaports of Normandy and Picardy, and prepared a force which seemed equal to the greatness of the enterprise. The king, on the other hand issued writs requiring the attendance of all his military tenants at Dover to defend the kingdom in this dangerous extremity. A great number appeared, and he selected an army of sixty thousand men—a power invincible, had they been united in affection to their prince and animated with a becoming zeal for the defence of their native country. But the people were swayed by superstition, and regarded their king with horror, as anathematised by papal censures: the barons, besides lying under the same prejudices, were all disgusted by his tyranny, and were, many of them, suspected of holding a secret correspondence with the enemy: and the incapacity and cowardice of the king himself made men prognosticate the most fatal effects from the French invasion.

Pandulf, whom the pope had chosen for his legate, had, before he left Rome, asked him whether, if the king of England in this desperate situation were willing to submit to the apostolic see, the church should, without the consent of Philip, grant him any terms of accommodation. Innocent, expecting from his agreement with a prince so abject both in character and fortune more advantages than from his alliance with a great and victorious monarch, who after such mighty acquisitions might become too haughty to be bound by spiritual chains, explained to Pandulf the conditions on which he was willing to be reconciled to the king of England. The legate, therefore, as soon as he arrived in the north of France, sent over two knights Templar to desire an interview of John at Dover, which was readily granted: he there represented to him, in such strong and probably in such true colours, his lost condition, the disaffection of his subjects, the secret combination of his vassals against him, the mighty armament of France, that John yielded at discretion, and subscribed to all the conditions which Pandulf was pleased to impose upon him. He promised, among other articles, that he would submit himself entirely to the judgment of the pope; that he would acknowledge Langton for primate; that he would restore all the exiled clergy and laity who had been banished on account of the contest; that he would make them full restitution of their goods and compensation for all damages, and everyone outlawed or imprisoned for his adherence to the pope should immediately be received into grace and favour. Four barons swore, along with the king, to the observance of this ignominious treaty.

But the ignominy of the king was not yet carried to its full height. Pandulf required him, as the first trial of obedience, to resign his kingdom to the church; and he persuaded him that he could nowise so effectually disappoint the French invasion as by thus putting himself under the immediate protection of the apostolic see. John, lying under the agonies of present terror, made no scruple of submitting to this condition. He issued a charter, in which he said that of his own free will, and by the common advice and consent of his barons, he had, for remission of his own sins and those of his family, resigned England and Ireland to God, to St. Peter and St. Paul, and to Pope Innocent and his successors in the apostolic chair; he agreed to hold these dominions as feudatory of the church of Rome, by the annual payment of 1,000 marks; and he stipulated that, if he or his successors should ever presume to revoke or infringe this charter, they should instantly forfeit all right to their dominions.

In consequence of this agreement, John did homage to Pandulf as the pope's legate, with all the submissive rites which the feudal law required of

vassals before their liege lord and superior. He came disarmed into the legate's presence, who was seated on a throne; he flung himself on his knees before him; he lifted up his joined hands, and put them within those of Pandulf; he swore fealty to the pope; and he paid part of the tribute which he owed for his kingdom as the patrimony of St. Peter. The legate, elated by this supreme triumph of sacerdotal power, could not forbear discovering extravagant symptoms of joy and exultation: he trampled on the money which was laid at his feet as an earnest of the subjection of the kingdom—an insolence of which, however offensive to all the English, no one present, except the archbishop of Dublin, dared to take any notice. But though Pandulf had brought the king to submit to these base conditions, he still refused to free him from the excommunication and interdict till an estimation should be taken of the losses of the ecclesiastics and full compensation and restitution should be made them.*f*

THE FIRST ENGLISH NAVAL VICTORY

Five or six days after these transactions Pandulf went over to France, and, to the astonishment and great wrath of Philip, announced to him that he must no longer molest a penitent son and a faithful vassal of the church, nor presume to invade a kingdom which was now part of the patrimony of St. Peter. "But," said Philip, "I have already expended enormous sums of money on this expedition, which I undertook at the pontiff's express commands, and for the remission of my sins." The nuncio repeated his inhibition and withdrew. The French king, however, who was already on the road, continued his march to the coast. Philip, who inveighed publicly against the selfish and treacherous policy of the pope, would not have been prevented from attempting the invasion by the dread of the thunders of the church, which rumbled over his head.

But other circumstances of a more worldly nature interfered: Ferrand, or Ferdinand, count of Flanders, demanded that certain towns which had lately been annexed to the French crown should be restored to him. Philip refused; and now, when he proposed to his great vassals that they should continue the enterprise against England, the count of Flanders, the most powerful of them all, said that his conscience would not permit him to follow his lord in such an unjust attempt, and suddenly withdrew with all his forces. Philip, vowing he would make Flanders a mere province of France, marched after him, and, taking several of the earl's best towns on his way, sat down with his army before the strong city of Ghent. Ferrand had already a secret understanding with John, and now he applied to that king for help. John's fleet lay ready in the harbour of Portsmouth. Seven hundred knights, with a large force of infantry, embarked in five hundred vessels, under the command of William, count of Holland, and William Longsword, earl of Salisbury, and immediately made sail for the coast of Flanders. They found the French fleet at anchor at Damme.*e*

Damme, which was now to be the scene of the first great naval action between the English and French, and the first great naval victory recorded in the English annals, was at that time the port of Bruges, from whence it is about a mile distant, being situated near the junction of the rivers Rey and Lieve.

When the French arrived off this harbour they offered peace to the inhabitants, who were wholly incapable of defending themselves against such a force; they obtained the money which they demanded as its price, and then

[1213 A.D.]

they plundered the place. Not satisfied with this, they proceeded to ravage the country round about; and the sailors, as well as the land forces, were thus employed when the English fleet, cruising in search of their enemy, approached. The English, as they neared the coast, espied many ships lying without the haven, which, capacious as it was, was not large enough to contain them all; many, therefore, were riding at anchor without the haven's mouth and along the coast. Shallops were presently sent out to espy whether they were friends or enemies; and if enemies, what their strength, and in what order they lay. These espiers, approaching as if they had been fishermen, came near enough to ascertain that the ships were left without sufficient hands to defend them; and, hastening back, told the commanders that the victory was in their hands, if they would only make good speed.

No time was lost; they made sail towards the enemy, and won the "tall ships" which were riding at anchor, with little difficulty, the men on board only requesting that their lives might be spared. The smaller ones, which were left dry when the tide was low, they spoiled of whatever was useful, and set on fire, the sailors escaping to the shore. This done, they set upon those that lay in the harbour, within the haven; and "here was hard hold for a while," because of the narrowness of the place, allowing no advantage for numbers or for skill. "And those Frenchmen," says the chronicler, "that were gone abroad into the country, perceiving that the enemies were come, by the running away of the mariners, returned with all speed to their ships to aid their fellows, and so made valiant resistance for a time; till the Englishmen, getting on board, and ranging themselves on either side of the haven, beat the Frenchmen so on the sides, and the ships grappling together in front, that they fought as it had been in a pitched field, till that, finally, the Frenchmen were not able to sustain the force of the Englishmen, but were constrained, after long fight and great slaughter, to yield themselves prisoners."

The first act of the conquerors was to give thanks to God for their victory. They then manned three hundred of the prizes, which were laden with corn, wine, oil, and other provisions, and with military stores, and sent them to England—the first fruits of that maritime superiority for which the church bells of this glorious island have so often pealed with joy. A hundred more were burned, because they were drawn up so far upon the sands that they could not be got out without more hands and cost of time than could be spared for them. There still remained a great part of the enemy's fleet, higher up the harbour, and protected by the town, in which Philip had left a sufficient force to protect the stores which he had left there, and the money for the payment of his troops. The English landed, the count of Flanders joined them, and they proceeded to attack the place; but by this there had been sufficient time for the French king to hasten, with an overpowering force, from the siege of Ghent. The English and their allies sustained a sharp action, and were compelled to retreat to their ships, with a loss computed by the French at 2,000 men. But they retreated no further than to the near shores of the isle of Walcheren; and Philip saw the impossibility of saving the remainder of his fleet, considering the unskilfulness of his own seamen, as well as other things. He set fire to them, therefore, himself, that they might not fall into the enemy's hands. Such was the fate of that great naval armament, which is said to be the first French fleet mentioned in history; and, as if the unfortunate town of Damme which he had promised not to injure, and the foreign merchants to whom his word was pledged had not suffered enough by the previous spoil, he set the place on fire also, and it was consumed: and he wasted the country round with fire.[9] Philip thus lost the

means of supporting his army in Flanders, or of transporting it to the English coast: half famished and overcome with vexation, he hurried across his own frontiers, leaving Count Ferrand to recover with ease all that he had lost.

JOHN AT VARIANCE WITH HIS BARONS

This first great naval victory transported the English people with joy; but with joy was mingled a malicious confidence and presumption in the heart of John, who now betrayed a determination to break the best part of his recent oaths. Being determined to carry the war into France, he summoned his vassals to meet him at Portsmouth. The barons went armed and appointed, as if ready to sail; but, when ordered to embark, they resolutely refused unless the king recalled the exiles, as he had promised to do. After some tergiversation John granted a reluctant consent, and Archbishop Langton, the bishops of London, Ely, Hereford, Lincoln, and Bath, the monks of Canterbury all, with their companions and numerous dependents, returned.

John and the archbishop met and kissed each other at Winchester; and there, in the porch of the cathedral church, Langton gave full absolution to the king, who again swore to govern justly, and maintain his fealty to the pope. It was, however, clear to all men that Langton placed no confidence in the king; and that the king, who considered him as the chief cause of all his troubles, regarded Langton with all the deadly hatred of which his dark character was capable. John now set sail with a few ships, but his barons were in no hurry to follow him, being far more eager to secure their own liberties than to recover the king's dominions on the Continent. They said that the time of their feudal service was expired, and they withdrew to a great council at St. Albans, where Fitzpeter, the justiciar, presided, and where they published resolves, in the form of royal proclamations, ordering the observance of old laws and denouncing the punishment of death against the sheriff's foresters, or other officers of the king who should exceed their proper and legal authority.

John got as far as the island of Jersey, when, finding that none followed him, he turned back with vows of vengeance. He landed, and marched with a band of mercenaries to the north, where the barons were most contumacious. Burning and destroying, he advanced as far as Northampton. Here Langton overtook him. "These barbarous measures," said the prelate, "are in violation of your oaths; your vassals must stand to the judgment of their peers, and not be wantonly harassed by arms." "Mind you your church," roared the furious king, "and leave me to govern the state." He continued his march to Nottingham, where Langton, who was not a man to be intimidated, again presented himself, and threatened to excommunicate all the ministers and officers that followed him in his lawless course. John then gave way, and, to save appearances, summoned the barons to meet him or his justices.

Langton hastened to London, and there, at a second meeting of the barons, he read the liberal charter which Henry I had granted on his accession; and, after inducing them to embrace its provisions, he made them swear to be true to each other, and to conquer or to die in support of their liberties. This was on the 25th of August. On the 29th of September a new legate from the pope, Cardinal Nicholas, arrived in England to settle the indemnity due to the exiles and to take off the interdict. John renewed his oath of fealty to Innocent, knelt in homage before the legate, paid 15,000 marks, and promised 40,000 more to the bishops. The interdict was removed; and from this moment the court of Rome changed sides, and, abandoning the cause of

liberty and the barons, stood for the king. This abandonment, however, did not discourage the nobles, nor did it even detach Archbishop Langton from the cause for which they had confederated.

A formidable league was now formed (1214) against the French king, and John was enabled to join it with some vigour. Ferrand, count of Flanders, Reynaud, count of Boulogne, and Otto, the new emperor of Germany, nephew to John, determined to invade France and divide that kingdom among them. Philip himself marched towards the frontiers of Flanders. He sent his son Louis into Brittany, whither the English king now advanced. John was kept in check, or lost his opportunity through cowardice and indolence, while his allies were thoroughly defeated at the battle of Bouvines—one of the most memorable battles of the Middle Ages, in which the emperor was completely ruined, and the count of Flanders, the count of Boulogne, and the earl of Salisbury were taken prisoners, with an immense number of inferior lords and knights.

This battle was fought on the 27th of July, near Bouvines, between Lille and Tournay. On the 19th of October following, John begged a truce, and obtained one for five years, on condition of abandoning all the towns and castles he had taken on the Continent. He arrived in England on the 20th of October, and, as if he would take vengeance on his English subjects for the reverses and shame he had suffered, he again let loose his foreign mercenaries on the land and began to violate all his most solemn promises. Fitzpeter, his justiciar, the only one of his ministers that could moderate his fury, had now been dead some months. John, who feared him, rejoiced at his death. "It is well," cried he, laughing as they told him the news; "in hell he may again shake hands with Hubert, our late primate, for surely he will find him there. By God's teeth, now for the first time I am king and lord of England."

But there were men at work resolute and skilful. Immediately after his arrival, the barons met to talk of the league they had formed with Langton. On the 20th of November they met in crowds at Bury St. Edmunds, where they finally determined to demand their rights, in a body, in the royal court at the festival of Christmas. The spirit of freedom was awakened, not soon to sleep again: they advanced one by one, according to seniority, to the high altar, and, laying their hands on it, they solemnly swore that if the king refused the rights they claimed they would withdraw their fealty and make war upon him, till, by a charter under his own seal, he should confirm their just petitions. They then parted, to meet again at the feast of the Nativity. When that solemn but festive season arrived, John found himself at Worcester, and almost alone; for none of his great vassals came as usual to congratulate him, and the countenances of his own attendants seemed gloomy and unquiet. He suddenly departed, and riding to London, there shut himself up in the strong house of the knights Templar. The barons followed close on the coward's steps, and on the feast of the Epiphany (at every move they chose some day consecrated by religion) they presented themselves in such force that he was obliged to admit them to an audience.

At first he attempted to browbeat the nobles, but they were firm to their purpose. John turned pale, and trembled. He then changed his tone, and cajoled instead of threatening. "Your petition," he said, "contains matter weighty and arduous. You must grant me time till Easter, that, with due deliberation, I may be able to do justice to myself and satisfy the dignity of my crown." The majority consented, on condition that Cardinal Langton, the bishop of Ely, and William, earl of Pembroke, should be the king's sureties that he would give them the satisfaction they demanded on the appointed

day. They were no sooner gone than John adopted measures which he fondly hoped would frustrate all their plans. He began by courting the church, and formally renounced the important prerogative, that had been hitherto so zealously contended for by himself and his great ancestors, touching the election of bishops and abbots. Having thus, as he thought, bound the clergy to his service, he turned his attention to the body of the people, whose progress had been slow, but steady, and whose importance was now immense. He ordered his sheriffs to assemble all the free men of their several counties and tender to them a new oath of allegiance.

His next step was to send an agent to Rome, to appeal to the pope against what he termed the treasonable violence of his vassals. The barons, too, despatched an envoy to the Eternal City; but it was soon made more than ever evident that Innocent would support the king through right and wrong. He wrote a startling letter to Cardinal Langton; but that extraordinary priest was deaf to the voice of his spiritual chief where the interests of his country were concerned. To make himself still surer, John took the cross on the 2d of February, solemnly swearing that he would lead an army to the Holy Land. This taking of the cross seemed to John the best of all defences.

RUNNYMEDE (1215 A.D.)

On the appointed day in Easter week the barons met at Stamford with great military pomp, being followed by two thousand knights and a host of retainers. The king was at Oxford. The barons marched to Brackley, within a few miles of that city, where they were met by a deputation from the sovereign, composed of Cardinal Langton, the earl of Pembroke, and the earl of Warenne. The confederates delivered the schedule containing the chief articles of their petition. "These are our claims," they said, "and, if they are not instantly granted, our arms shall do us justice." When the deputies returned, and Langton expounded the contents of the parchment he held in his hand, John exclaimed, in a fury, "And why do they not demand my crown also? By God's teeth, I will not grant them liberties which will make me a slave." He then made some evasive offers, which the barons understood and rejected. Pandulf, who was with the king, now contended that the cardinal-primate ought to excommunicate the confederates; but Langton said he knew the pope's real intentions had not been signified, and that unless the king dismissed the foreign mercenaries, whom he had brought into the kingdom for its ruin, he would presently excommunicate them.

The barons now proclaimed themselves "the army of God and of holy church," and unanimously elected Robert Fitzwalter, earl of Dunmore, to be their general. They then marched against the castle of Northampton. The garrison, composed of foreigners, stood out for the king; and after fifteen days they gave up the siege and marched to Bedford. On whichever side the free burghers of England threw their substantial weight, that party must prevail, and, as yet, no declaration had been made in favour of the confederates. But now anxiety vanished—the people of Bedford threw open their gates; and soon after messengers arrived from the capital with secret advice that the principal citizens of London were devoted to their cause and would receive them with joy. Losing no time, they pursued their course to London. It was the 24th of May, and a Sunday: the gates were open—the people hearing mass in their churches—when the army entered the city in excellent order and profound silence. On the following day the barons issued proclamations

[1215 A.D.]

requiring all who had hitherto remained neutral to join them against the perjured John. In all parts of the kingdom the lords and knights quitted their castles to join the national standard at London. The heart of John again turned to water: he saw himself almost entirely deserted, only seven knights remaining near his person. Recovering, however, from his first stupefaction, he resorted to his old arts: he assumed a cheerful countenance; said what his lieges had done was well done; and he despatched the earl of Pembroke to London, to assure the barons that, for the good of peace and the exaltation of his reign, he was ready freely to grant all the rights and liberties, and only wished them to name a day and place of meeting. "Let the day," replied the barons, "be the 15th of June—the place, Runnymede."

On the morning of the appointed day, the king moving from Windsor Castle and the barons from the town of Staines, the parties met on the green meadow, close by the Thames, which the barons had named. With John came eight bishops, Pandulf, Almeric, the master of the English Templars, the earl of Pembroke, and thirteen other gentlemen; but the majority of this party, though they attended him as friends and advisers, were known to be in their hearts favourable to the cause of the barons. On the other side stood Fitzwalter and the whole nobility of England. With scarcely an attempt to modify any of its clauses, and with a facility that might justly have raised suspicion, the king signed the scroll presented to him. This was Magna Charta. As the profound duplicity and immorality of John were well known, the barons exacted securities. They required that he should disband and send out of the kingdom all his foreign officers, with their families and followers; that for the ensuing two months the barons should keep possession of the city, and Langton of the Tower of London; and that they should be allowed to choose twenty-five members from their own body to be guardians or conservators of the liberties of the kingdom, with power, in case of any breach of the charter—such breach not being redressed immediately—to make war on the king; to distrain and distress him by seizing his castles, lands, possessions, and in any other manner they could, till the grievance should be redressed; always, however, saving harmless the person of the said lord the king, the person of the queen, and the persons of their royal children.[e]

MAGNA CHARTA

Magna Charta, the Great Charter of Liberties, is commonly regarded as the basis of English freedom. This is, to some extent, a misconception. It was a code of laws, expressed in simple language, embodying two principles: the first, such limitations of the feudal claims of the king as would prevent their abuse; the second, such specification of the general rights of all freemen as were derived from the ancient laws of the realm, however these rights had been neglected or perverted. It contained no assertion of abstract principles of freedom or justice, but met unquestionable evils by practical remedies. To imagine that this charter contained any large views of government that were not consistent with the condition of society at the time of its enactment is to believe that the men who enforced it, with their swords in their hands, were, to use a modern expression, before their age. If they had been before their age, by any fortuitous possession of greater wisdom, foresight, and liberality than belonged to their age, that charter would not have stood up against the regal power which again and again assailed it. It was built, as all English freedom has been built, upon something which had gone before it.

It was not a revolution. It was a conservative reform. It demanded no limitation of the regal power which had not been acknowledged, in theory, by every king who had taken the coronation oath. It made that oath, which had been regarded as a mere form of words, a binding reality. It defined, in broad terms of practical application, the essential difference between a limited and a despotic monarchy. It preserved all the proper attributes of the kingly power, whilst it guarded against the king being a tyrant. The feudal monarch was invested with many privileges, as the lord of a body of feudatories; and these privileges, as society gradually assumed a character less and less feudal, became the sources of endless oppressions for several centuries, and were slowly swept away, one by one, in the gradual development of representative government. To have imagined that the barons of Runnymede could have regarded the king simply as the sovereign of the realm—as the chief magistrate, as the fountain of justice, as the great central point of administration—is to imagine an impossibility. They had feudal interests to regard as a feudal aristocracy. It is both unjust and unwise to consider the barons as mere selfish men, because the charter provided a remedy for many wrongs that more especially bore upon themselves in their feudal relations to the king.

It limited the royal practice of extracting arbitrary sums under the name of reliefs; of wasting the estates of wards; of disposing in marriage of heirs during minority; and so of heiresses, and of widows. It brought back the right to demand aids strictly to the original conditions of the feudal tenures, which had been perpetually extended at the pleasure of the king. To levy an aid upon the tenants of the crown, in any case beyond the legal ones of the king's personal captivity, the knighthood of his eldest son, or the marriage of his daughter, the consent of the great council of the tenants in chief was necessary.[1] So also was limited the right to scutage, or compensation for knight-service. But at the same time the chief tenants agreed that "every liberty and custom which the king had granted to his tenants, as far as concerned him, should be observed by the clergy and laity towards their tenants as far as concerned them." Such are the principal clauses of the charter as regards the great body of feudatories, in relation to the crown and in relation to their subtenants.

But there were other conditions of more permanent importance, which had regard to the sovereign authority over all men. These were derived from the great Saxon principles of freedom, which a century and a half of Norman power had more or less obliterated but had not destroyed. Twysden,[k] an old writer upon the English constitution, during the great struggle of the days of Charles I, says, "Never people in Europe have had the rights of monarchy better limited, with the preservation of the subject's liberty, than the English, from this basis." But that basis, he also says, was contained "in the ancient customs of the kingdom." The charter was in accordance with the great principle of preservation and progress, by which it has been maintained and extended for more than six hundred years. Let us briefly notice what the English derive from this charter, which still belongs to our own time and is an essential part of the rights of every Englishman. A large portion of the people, the villeins and serfs, had little or no participation in the rights which it asserted, but the very assertion hastened a period when all should be equal before the law.

Passing over the clauses of the charter which protected the tenants and subtenants from illegal distresses of the crown—which attempted to limit

[1] This clause was subsequently expunged from the charter by the influence of the Crown

RATIFICATION OF MAGNA CHARTA BY KING JOHN

(From an old print)

[1215 A.D.]

the abuse of purveyance, or the right of the king's officers to take necessaries for the royal household, on their own terms; which prescribed an uniformity of weights and measures; which protected merchant strangers; and which confirmed the liberties and free customs of London, and other cities and towns —let us look at the broad principle of government which is contained in these words: "No free man shall be taken, or imprisoned, or disseised, or outlawed, or banished, or any otherwise destroyed; nor will we pass upon him, nor send upon him, unless by the legal judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land. To no man will we sell, to no man will we deny or delay right or justice." In the charter of Henry III, which was a confirmation of that of John, we find that no man was to be "disseised of his freehold, or liberties, or free customs" by any arbitrary proceeding. Life, liberty, and property were thus protected. No man, from that time, could be detained in prison without trial. No man would have to buy justice. The charter recognised the court of common pleas, and the circuits of judges of assize, which had been before established. But it put an end to that enormous corruption by which justice was sold, not by mere personal bribery of corrupt ministers of the crown, but by bribing the crown through their hands.

The Great Charter, as we see, in these broad provisions, applied only to free men. A large portion of the people were in the condition of villeinage. Some were in a state of slavery. Those who held by servile tenures were thus incidentally mentioned in a clause respecting wardship: "The warder of the lands of such heir who shall be under age shall take of the land of such heir only reasonable issues, reasonable customs, and reasonable services, and that without destruction and waste of the men and things." The men went with the land as chattels. One sole piece of consideration for the "*ascripti glebæ*" occurs in the charter, upon the subject of amerciament, or fines to the king—the mulcts of the Anglo-Saxons: "A free man shall not be amerced for a small fault, but according to the degree of the fault, and for a great crime in proportion according to its magnitude: saving alway to the freeman his tenement, and after the same manner saving to a merchant his merchandise. And a villein shall be amerced after the same manner, saving to him his wainage, if he falls under our mercy; and none of the aforesaid amerciaments shall be imposed except by the oath of the good men of the neighbourhood." The expression, "*salvo wainagio suo*," saves to the villein his implements of husbandry—his carts and ploughs. It was a small privilege, but it indicates that this class was not out of the protection of the law.

The specific provisions of the Great Charter went to the remedy of existing evils as they presented themselves in the existing state of society. Generations passed away before villeinage and slavery ceased to exist in England. Their abolition was the result of the internal forces, so to speak, of society, and not of sovereign grace or legislative enactment. The barons of England did the work which was called for in their generation; and they left to their successors in the battle for liberty, whether they were noble or plebeian, to carry on the same work in the same practical and temperate spirit. "From this era," says Hallam[l], "a new soul was infused into the people of England." The principle was rooted in English earth, like the Ankerwyke Yew, which was a vigorous tree on the opposite bank of the Thames when "the army of God and holy church" stood upon Runnymede, and which still bears its green leaf.[c]

"With regard to the administration of justice," says Blackstone, "the

Charter, besides prohibiting all denials or delays, fixed the court of common pleas at Westminster, that the suitors might no longer be harassed with following the king's person in all his progresses; and at the same time brought the trial of issues home to the very doors of the freeholders, by directing assizes to be taken in the proper counties, and establishing annual circuits. It also corrected some abuses then incident to the trials by wager of law and of battle, directed the regular awarding of inquests for life or member, prohibited the king's inferior ministers from holding pleas of the Crown, or trying any criminal charge, whereby many forfeitures might otherwise have unjustly accrued to the exchequer, and regulated the time and place of holding the inferior tribunals of justice. And it protected every individual of the nation in the free enjoyment of his life, his liberty, and his property, unless declared to be forfeited by the judgment of his peers or the law of the land."

We need not comment at greater length on the Charter here, but the full text of this all-important document will be found in an appendix at the end of the present volume.[a]

CIVIL WAR

As soon as the great assembly dispersed, and John found himself in Windsor castle safe from the observing eyes of his subjects, he called a few foreign adventurers around him, and gave vent to rage and curses against the charter. According to the chroniclers his behaviour was that of a frantic madman; for, besides swearing, he gnashed his teeth, rolled his eyes, and gnawed sticks and straws. The creatures who would be ruined and expelled by the charter roused him by appealing to his passion of revenge, and he forthwith despatched two of them to the Continent to procure him the means of undoing all that he had been obliged to do. One of these adventurers went to Flanders, Poitou, Aquitaine, and Gascony, to hire other adventurers to come to England and fight against the barons; the other went to Rome, to implore the aid of Innocent. John then sent messengers to such governors of his castles as were foreigners or men devoted to him, commanding them silently, and without exciting notice, to lay in provisions and put themselves in a state of defence.

The king now withdrew to Winchester, where, alarmed at the whole course of his conduct, a deputation waited on him on the 27th of June. He laughed at their suspicions—swore, with his usual volubility, that they were unfounded, and that he was ready to do all those things to which he was pledged. He issued a few writs required of him, and then withdrew still further to the Isle of Wight. Here he remained about three weeks. He was at Oxford on the 21st of July, where he appointed a conference which he did not attend, posting away to Dover, where he stayed during the whole of September, anxiously awaiting the arrival of his mercenary recruits from the Continent. When the barons learned that troops of Brabançons and others were stealing into the land in small parties, they despatched William D'Albiney, at the head of a chosen band, to take possession of the royal castle of Rochester.

D'Albiney had scarcely entered the castle, which he found almost destitute of stores and engines of defence, when John found himself sufficiently strong to venture from Dover. The un-English despot, followed by the outcasts and freebooters of Europe, laid siege to Rochester castle at the beginning of October. The barons, knowing the insufficient means of defence within the castle, marched from London to its relief, but they were obliged to retreat before the superior force of the foreigners, who, day after day, were joined by fresh

adventurers from the other side of the Channel. Fortunately for England, one Hugh de Boves and a vast horde of marauders perished in a tempest on their way from Calais to Dover. John bewailed this loss like a maniac, but he pressed the siege of Rochester castle, and still prevented the barons from relieving it. After a gallant resistance of eight weeks, D'Albiney surrendered. John ordered him to be hanged, with his whole garrison; but Savaric de Mauléon, the leader of one of the foreign bands, opposed this barbarous mandate, because he feared the English might retaliate on his own followers, if any should fall into their hands. The tyrant was therefore contented to butcher the inferior prisoners, while all the knights were sent to the castles of Corfe and Nottingham.

The loss of Rochester castle was a serious blow to the cause of the barons, who were soon after excommunicated by the pope. Innocent declared that the barons were worse than Saracens for molesting a vassal of the holy see—a religious king who had taken the cross. Thus emboldened, John marched from Kent to St. Albans, accompanied by a mixed and savage host. It was thought at one time he would turn upon London, but the attitude of the capital struck him with terror; and, leaving a strong division to devastate the southeastern counties, he moved towards Nottingham, marking his progress with flames and blood.

Alexander, the young king of Scotland, had entered into an alliance with the English barons, and, having crossed the border, was investing the castle of Norham. A few days after the feast of Christmas, when the ground was covered with deep snow, John marched from Nottingham into Yorkshire, burning and slaying, and becoming more savage the further he advanced and the less he was opposed. Every hamlet, every house on the road, felt the fury of his execrable host—he himself giving the example, and setting fire with his own hands in the morning to the house in which he had rested the preceding night. His foreign soldiery put his native subjects to the torture to make them confess where they had concealed their money. All the castles and towns they could take were given to the flames; and the people of Yorkshire and Northumberland were reminded of the expedition of William the Conqueror. The Scottish king retired before a superior force, and John, vowing he would "unkennel the young fox," followed him as far as Edinburgh. Here, meeting with opposition, he paused, and then, never having any valour except when unopposed, he turned back to England. In the mean time the division left in the south committed equal atrocities, and wherever the castle of a noble was taken, it was given, with the adjoining estate, to some hungry adventurer.

On the 16th of December another sentence of excommunication was promulgated, and the city of London was laid under an interdict. This measure excited some fear and wavering in the country, but the citizens of London had the boldness to despise it. According to Matthew Paris,[n] they asserted that the pontiff had no right to interfere in worldly concerns; and, spite of the interdict, they kept open their churches, rang their bells, and celebrated their Christmas with unusual festivity.

THE CROWN OFFERED TO LOUIS OF FRANCE

But the barons in London, who saw their property the prey to new invaders, and who knew the full extent of the danger to which the nation was exposed, were sorely disquieted, and knew not what measures to adopt. At

last they unanimously resolved upon the very equivocal and perilous expedient of calling in foreign aid. They sent to offer the crown to Philip's eldest son, Prince Louis, who was connected with the reigning family by his marriage with Blanche of Castile, John's own niece; believing that, should he land amongst them, the mercenaries now with John, who were chiefly subjects of France, would join his standard, or at least refuse to bear arms against him. Philip and Louis eagerly grasped at this offer, but the wary old king moderated the impatience of his son, and would not permit him to venture into England until twenty-four hostages, sons of the noblest of the English, were sent into France. Then a fleet, with a small army, was sent up the Thames. It arrived at London at the end of February, and the commander assured the barons that Louis himself would be there with a proper force by the feast of Easter.

Innocent, in the mean while, was not inactive in John's, or rather in his own cause; he despatched a new legate to England; and Gualo, on his journey, reached France in time to witness and to endeavour to prevent the preparations making for invasion. He boldly asked both king and prince how they dared attack the patrimony of the church, and threatened them with instant excommunication. To the astonishment of the churchman, Louis advanced a claim to the English throne through right of his wife, and departed for Calais, where his army was collecting. At the appointed time he set sail from Calais with a numerous and well-appointed army. His passage was stormy. The mariners of the Cinque Ports, who adhered to the English king, cut off and took some of his ships, but on the 30th of May he landed safely at Sandwich. John, who had come round to Dover with a numerous army, fled before the French landed, and, burning and ravaging the country, he went to Guildford, then to Winchester, and then to Bristol, where Gualo, the pope's legate, soon joined him. Leaving Dover castle in his rear, Louis besieged and took the castle of Rochester. He then marched to the capital, where, on the 2nd of June, 1216, he was joyfully received by the barons and citizens, who conducted him, with a magnificent procession, to St. Paul's. After he had offered up his prayers, the nobles and citizens did homage and swore fealty to him. And then he, with his hand on the gospels, also swore to restore to all orders their good laws, and to each individual the estates and property of which he had been robbed. Soon after Louis published a manifesto, addressed to the king of Scotland and all the nobles not present in London.

An immense effect was presently seen: nearly every one of the few nobles who had followed John now left him and repaired to London; all the men of the north, from Lincolnshire to the Borders, rose up in arms against him; the Scottish king made ready to march to the south; and, at first in small troops and then in masses, all the foreign mercenaries, with the exception of those of Gascony and Poitou, deserted the standard of the tyrant, and either returned to their homes or took service under Louis and the barons, who were now enabled to retake many of their castles. Gualo, the legate, did all he could to keep up the drooping, abject spirit of John; but at the very moment of crisis, on the 16th of July, the pope himself, the mighty Innocent, died, and left the church to be wholly occupied for some time by the election of a new pontiff.

Louis marched to Dover and laid siege to the castle, which was most bravely defended for the king by Hubert de Burgh; and at the same time some of the barons attacked Windsor castle, which was equally well defended. When the siege of Dover castle had lasted several weeks, Louis found himself obliged to convert it into a blockade. Withdrawing his army beyond reach of the arrows of the garrison, he swore that he would reduce the place by

famine, and then hang all its defenders. The barons raised the siege of Windsor castle entirely in order to repel John, who, after running from place to place, had at last made his appearance near them, and was pillaging the estates of some of those nobles. At their approach he fell back, and eluding their pursuit by skill, or, more probably, by hard running, he reached the town of Stamford. The barons wheeled round and joined Louis at Dover, where much valuable time was lost in inactivity, for that prince would neither assault the castle nor move from it. Other circumstances at the same time caused discontent; Louis treated the English with disrespect, and began to make grants of estates and titles in England to his French followers. Several barons and knights withdrew from Dover, and though few would trust John, all began to doubt whether they had not committed a fatal mistake in calling in the aid of a foreign prince. As these doubts prevailed more and more, the cause of John brightened. Soon after eluding the pursuit of the barons, he had made himself master of Lincoln, where he established his headquarters for some time. Associations were formed in his favour in several of the maritime counties, and the English cruisers frequently captured the supplies from the Continent destined for Louis.

THE DEATH OF JOHN (1216 A.D.)

At the beginning of October, marching through Peterborough, John entered the district of Croyland, and plundered and burned the farm-houses belonging to that celebrated abbey; he then proceeded to the town of Lynn, where he had a depot of provisions and other stores. Here, turning his face again towards the north, he marched to Wisbeach, and from Wisbeach he proceeded to a place called the Cross Keys, on the southern side of the Wash. It is not clear why he took that dangerous route, but he resolved to cross the Wash by the sands. At low water this estuary is passable, but it is subject to sudden rises of the tide. John and his army had nearly reached the opposite shore, called the Fossdike, when the returning tide began to roar. Pressing forward in haste and terror, they escaped; but, on looking back, John beheld the carriages and sumpter horses, which carried his money, overtaken by the waters; the surge broke furiously over them, and they presently disappeared—carriages, horses, treasures, and men being swallowed up in a whirlpool, caused by the impetuous ascent of the tide and the descending current of the river Welland. In a mournful silence, broken only by curses and useless complaints, John travelled on to the Cistercian abbey of Swineshead, where he rested for the night. Here he ate gluttonously of some peaches or pears, and drank new cider immoderately.

The popular story of his being poisoned by a monk may be true or false; but it is told in two ways, and was never told at all by any writer living at the time, or within half a century of it; and the excess already mentioned, acting upon an irritated mind and fevered body, seems to be cause enough for what followed. He passed the night sleepless, restless, and in horror. At an early hour on the following morning, the 15th of October, he mounted his horse to pursue his march, but he was soon compelled, by a burning fever and acute pain, to dismount. His attendants then brought up a horse-litter, in which they laid him, and so conveyed him to the castle of Sleaford. Here he rested for the night, which brought him no repose, but an increase of his disorder. The next day they carried him with great difficulty to the castle of Newark, on the Trent, and there he sent for a confessor, and laid himself down to die.

The abbot of Croxton, who was equally skilled in medicine and divinity, attended him in his last hours, and witnessed his anguish and tardy repentance.

He named his eldest son, Henry, his successor, and dictated a letter to the recently elected pope, Honorius III, imploring the protection of the church for his young and helpless children. He made all the knights who were with him swear fealty to Henry, and he sent orders to the sheriffs of counties and the governors of castles to be faithful to the prince. Messengers arrived from some of the barons, who were disgusted with Louis, and proposed returning to their allegiance. This gleam of hope came too late—the "tyrant fever" had destroyed the tyrant. The abbot of Croxton asked him where he would have his body buried. John groaned, "I commit my soul to God, and my body to St. Wulfstan!" and soon after he expired, on the 18th of October, in the forty-ninth year of his age and the seventeenth of his wretched reign. They carried his body to Worcester, and interred it in the cathedral church there, of which St. Wulfstan was the patron saint. In this way the dying malediction of the heartbroken Henry II upon his rebellious children had not fallen in vain. Richard, after all his military glory, perished before a paltry fortress; John died a disgraced and baffled fugitive, in the midst of subjects who triumphed over his death as a happy national deliverance.[e]

THE CHARACTER OF KING JOHN

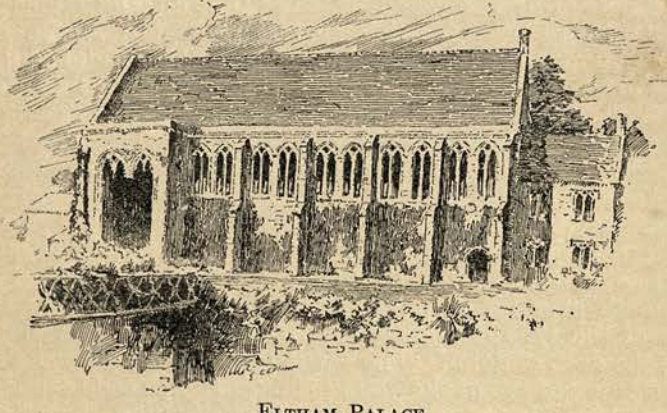
It has been the fate of few personages in English history, certainly of no one who ever wore the crown, to be so universally despised as John Lackland. From his own day to the present there have been none to praise, and few to apologise for him. "Foul as it is, hell itself is defiled by the fouler presence of John," wrote one of his contemporaries. And this has become the verdict of history. He was endowed by nature with good qualities in abundance, but all his life long he seems to have delighted in hiding them and in allowing his evil propensities to dominate him. Great abilities he possessed in more than the average measure, but he appeared to enjoy rather to prevent them than to use them in strengthening himself and his kingdom. In his external characteristics, as Green[h] picturesquely points out, John possessed all the cleverness, the vivacity, the good humour, and the personal charm of manner of the Plantagenets, but in his inner soul he was the worst outcome of the Angevins. "Within himself," says that author, "he united into one mass of wickedness their insolence, their selfishness, their unbridled lust, their cruelty and tyranny, their shamelessness, their superstition, their cynical indifference to honour and truth."

A traitor first to his father, then to his brother, he seems to have been utterly lacking in faithfulness to high or low. Possessing a singular power of attracting men and women, he utilised it basely by despoiling the men of their possessions and the women of their honour. Throughout his reign there are brief periods marked by outbursts of his inborn genius for war, his wonderful powers of recuperation, his ability to see and take instant advantage of his enemies. It was John who, at the moment of Philip's greatness, effected the formation of a confederacy that all but resulted in his overthrow. It is declared by Green that John was not the incapable sluggard that some critics have thought him. His fall was not due to lack of strength. "The awful lesson of his life," says Green,[h] "rests on the fact that it was no weak and indolent voluptuary, but the ablest and most ruthless of the Angevins, who

[1216 A.D.]

lost Normandy, became the vassal of the pope, and perished in a struggle of despair against English freedom."

The estimate of Burke,[i] while differing in some respects from that of Green, is perhaps more in agreement with the opinion ordinarily held of the king. "He was indolent," says Burke, "yet restless in his disposition; fond of working by violent methods, without any vigour; boastful, but continually betraying his fears; showing on all occasions such a desire of peace as hindered him from ever enjoying it. Having no spirit of order, he never looked forward—content by any temporary expedient to extricate himself from a present difficulty. Rash, arrogant, perfidious, irreligious, unquiet, he made a tolerable head of a party, but a bad king; and had talents fit to disturb another's government, not to support his own. A most striking contrast presents itself between the conduct and fortune of John and his adversary Philip. Philip came to the crown when many of the provinces of France, by being in the hands of too powerful vassals, were in a manner dismembered from the kingdom; the royal authority was very low in what remained. He reunited to the crown a country as valuable as what belonged to it before; he reduced his subjects of all orders to a stricter obedience than they had given to his predecessors. He withstood the papal usurpation, and yet used it as an instrument of his designs; whilst John, who inherited a great territory, and an entire prerogative, by his vices and weakness gave up his independency to the pope, his prerogative to his subjects, and a large part of his dominions to the king of France."[a]



ELTHAM PALACE
(Built in 1270)

A PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE[1] OF THE REIGN OF HENRY III

[1216–1272 A.D.]

By T. F. TOUT, M.A.

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At first sight the long reign of Henry III. is one of the dreariest in English History. The boy king came to the throne of a country driven to seek in rebellion a relief from the intolerable oppressions of his father, King John. The most strenuous of his subjects, the barons, who in wresting the Great Charter from John had unconsciously laid the foundation of English liberty, could only save themselves from the tyrant by calling in as their leader, Louis of France, the heir of his inveterate enemy, King Philip II. The throne of the King of nine was mainly upheld by the foreign mercenaries and adventurers, whose domination had made the government of his father odious to every class of Englishman. Yet his accession was secured by the loyalty of a few faithful friends of the house of Anjou, at whose head stood the venerable Earl of Pembroke, William the Marshal, who became Regent in everything but in name. The strong support of the church was also given to the little King, and it was in close co-operation with the papal legate, Gualo, that Pembroke set to work to put down the rebellion. The Great Charter was re-issued under the double sanction of the royal and papal authority. Louis of France was defeated at Lincoln, and Hubert de Burgh, by his naval victory off Sandwich over Eustace the Monk, cut off the reinforcements sent to him from France. Louis abandoned England in despair, only exacting as the price of his retirement a fresh re-issue of the Charters. William the Marshal had then his chance of restoring order, but he died before he had advanced very far in his task.

Hubert de Burgh, the Justiciar, then took up the government of England. An experienced official, trained in the school of Henry II., he succeeded, after years of painful struggle, in restoring the administrative system; in crushing those barons who, like William of Albemarle, had sought to revive the old feudal claim that each great lord should be virtual monarch over his own estates; and in driving away the foreign adventurers of the type of Falkes de Bréauté, who had swarmed into the land during the days of John. The worst misfortunes seemed over by the time of the coming of age of the young King. It was soon found, however, that the majority of Henry only aggravated the situation. The King showed indeed that he possessed many amiable and attractive qualities. He was pious, virtuous, kindly, and a friend of arts and letters, but his weakness of character and incapacity for serious effort made him unfit to govern the country. Like many weak men, Henry III. was too suspicious to allow others to discharge the burdens which he himself was incapable of bearing. He drove Hubert from power under circumstances of base ingratitude, and

[1] A more detailed treatment of the political aspects of the reign of Henry III. will be found in the succeeding chapters. The summary here presented is intended to serve as a guide to fuller understanding of the intellectual and social aspects of an important and difficult period.]

he did not even remain true to Hubert's supplanter, Peter des Roches, the Poitevin bishop of Winchester, who was himself one of John's worst legacies to his son. Henry's effort to govern through clerks and dependents meant the indefinite continuation of weak and divided authority. His falling back upon foreign kinsmen and favourites to supply his own deficiencies, and to protect him from the indignation of his subjects, only served to perpetuate a period of divided counsels and incompetent government. Wave after wave of alien invasion swept over the land. First came the Savoyard and Provençal kinsmen of Henry's queen, Eleanor of Provence. Henry's ineffective efforts to win back his ancestors' dominions in South-Western France resulted only in his bringing back with him to England his Poitevin half-brothers and sisters, greedy, poor, restless and eager at any cost to establish themselves nobly in their brother's kingdom. Besides the Savoyards and the Poitevins, there were the constant immigration of foreign ecclesiastics, the invasion of place-hunting Roman clerks, the embassies of greedy legates and the constant missions of papal tax-gatherers and similar ecclesiastical adventurers. Before long the King was surrounded by a ring of alien advisers who drove patriotic Englishmen from his counsels and taught him to look with distrust upon his natural associates, the earls and barons of England.

It was in vain that faint efforts of opposition broke out from time to time against the king and his foreign friends. Richard Marshal, Earl of Pembroke, son of the great regent, lost his life in a vain attempt to reorganise the baronial opposition, and even the King's brother, Richard, Earl of Cornwall, strove to little purpose to force upon Henry a more resolute and patriotic policy. Even more futile than the baronial was the ecclesiastical opposition. There was no prelate strong and determined enough to play the part which Stephen Langton had filled so admirably in the early years of the reign. The weak and saintly archbishop, Edmund Rich, abandoned his post in despair when he discovered that the pope was as hard a taskmaster as the King. So vigorous a prelate as Robert Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln, exhausted his energies in vain and disregarded protests. The close union between the English crown and the papacy frustrated all the efforts of the patriotic bishops. Believing like all their contemporaries that the pope was "the universal ordinary," the divinely constituted source of all ecclesiastical powers, they dared not lift their hands against an authority so sacred. Even when the popes frankly abandoned definitely ecclesiastic claims and used their ancient spiritual, and their newly-won temporal rights in England, to raise money to carry on their political crusade against Frederick II., the excommunicated Emperor, there was no withstanding their encroachments.

For five-and-twenty years things grew steadily worse and worse. The country remained badly governed; heavy taxes were exacted and the taxpayers gained nothing in return; the Charters were repeatedly confirmed but no honest effort was made to carry them out; the mass of the King's heritage in France was hopelessly lost; the Gascon remnant of the great foreign dominions of Henry II. was steadily falling away from obedience to its absentee Duke; and a petty chieftain, like Llewelyn of Wales, successfully resisted every effort to restrain his aggressions and built up a great Celtic principality out of his hereditary mountain chieftainship. Undeterred by the failure of all his previous efforts, Henry became more ambitious every year. Though he could not rule England, he was not contented until his son Edmund accepted the monarchy of Sicily and his

brother Richard became King of the Romans and the nominal secular head of Christendom. The enraged barons met in angry parliaments, refused supplies, and devised elaborate schemes for transferring the exercise of the royal authority from the King in person to a baronial committee appointed by themselves. But they had little coherence of policy, and suffered from want of able leadership. Thus it was that abuses continued to grow rankly until they were over-ripe for the harvest.

Up to now our tale is one of almost unrelieved misery and incompetence. Yet the years of Henry's weak and suspicious rule are from other points of view among the richest and most attractive in our annals. It was the best period of the thirteenth century, the greatest and most significant period of the middle ages, not only for England but for the whole western world. New movements were radiating throughout Christendom, and England had its full share in the general tendencies of the age. Even the love of foreigners and foreign ways, with which Henry was so justly reproached, had its good side in making the King give a cordial welcome to the new ideas that were fast becoming the common property of all Europe. The France of St. Louis, though nominally our enemy, was bound to England by a thousand ties, new and old. Its vernacular literature was common to the two lands; it was the original home of the new gothic art which was changing the face of the country; it was the centre of the cosmopolitan lay culture of the knightly class; it was the home of the great university of Paris, which attracted to itself so large a proportion of the best English intellect and set to all the world the new academic ideal of an international brotherhood of students and scholars. Nor was even Roman influence all for the bad: Rome sent England its ecclesiastical leaders in Langton and Rich; she was unwearied in preaching peace, save when her interests made her imagine that war was sanctified by religious aims; she set in her world-wide system of law, theology, discipline and worship, an ideal of unity and order that did much to counterbalance the greed of the curialists and the worldly ambitions of the pontiffs. Thus even the alien invasions of England had their useful side. There was compensation for the oppressions of the Poitevin and Provençal in the free current of world-wide intercourse, of which the King's and the Pope's foreigners were only the least desirable representatives.

The best sides of the influence of Europe on England can be illustrated by the coming of the friars and the rise of the Universities. Within a few years of the accession of Henry III. there arrived in England a small band of alien representatives of the mendicant ideal. First the Dominicans came in 1221, and then the Franciscans followed in 1224. Though their beginnings were humble, and their earliest efforts were damped by every imaginable obstacle, both orders soon took firm roots in the land, and, as one of their number boasted "sweet Jesus sowed the grain of mustard seed which soon became a plant greater than any other." Their zeal for the poor and afflicted made them the best of pastors, missionaries and physicians; their devotion to the faith gave them the command of the schools of theology; their popular sympathy made them the most trusted friends of the people, at the same time that they became the advisers, confessors, and chief confidants of Kings and nobles. Though the friars soon fell away from their earlier poverty and simplicity of life, the fact that they continued the chief teachers of religion to the people down to the Reformation, attests with clearness the permanence and depth of their influence. With all their fanaticism and bigotry, they

embodied the best ideals of mediæval religious life. Luckily England had no need for the Inquisition, the management of which was a chief blot on the friars' activity in some other lands.

The Universities, like the friars, were expressions of the cosmopolitan tendencies of the age. It was under Henry III. that Oxford became important and Cambridge began its existence, but Oxford was but a pale reflexion of the glory of Paris, and Cambridge during the thirteenth century was poor and insignificant, as compared with Oxford. Even if the English scholar who was ambitious of a great career, studied at Oxford in his youth, he was generally attracted over seas by the superior claim of Paris, and it was comparatively seldom that he went back to his native country. It is impossible to exaggerate the influence of these corporations of teachers and learners on the life of the age. They opened up new careers for talent: they set up the new academic type side by side with the earlier types of priest and warrior; they stimulated intellectual curiosity: they stamped the thirteenth century as the most intellectual and scientific period of the middle age, which, in its eager quest of knowledge set but little thought on form or literary art, and cared for little which it could not explain or reason about. The academic men were all clerks, and their rise strengthened the cosmopolitan ecclesiastical position on the one hand, though it ever excited questionings as to the fundamental principles on which the Church was based on the other. As the native land of Roger Bacon, and Duns Scotus, and of many other illustrious philosophers and thinkers, England took quite its due share in building up the vigorous and triumphant scholasticism of the thirteenth century.

The growth of academic science was not favourable to literary art, and the thirteenth century claims few great names in the purely literary history of England. The classical humanism of the twelfth century was stamped out by the technical learning of its successor, and even the historians became, with the great exception of Matthew Paris, dull and precise chroniclers with little eye to style or human interest. Vernacular literature grew in abundance rather than in quality, and was marked by useful technical treatises and popular translations or adaptations rather than by original work of high rank. But even literature reflected, though not too clearly, some of the activity of the age. It is, however, rather in art than in letters that the stronger currents of the time are to be sought. The thirteenth century was the great age of English gothic architecture. This is perhaps best represented by Salisbury Cathedral, which is almost entirely of the reign of Henry III., and somewhat less characteristically in Westminster Abbey, which, however, has an interest of its own as embodying the effort of the king to rebuild his favourite foundation after the stricter French fashion of architecture and with little regard to the English tastes illustrated in such a structure as Salisbury. The growth of trade and commerce is another no less characteristic feature of the age, though economic prosperity in England still largely depended on the alien merchants, Netherlanders, Germans or Frenchmen, who still carried on the bulk of her foreign commerce; and on the hated foreign financiers, such as the Jews and their successful rivals and ultimate supplanters the companies of Italian bankers. Thus in nearly every aspect of life there was the greatest activity and progress. Europe was fully awakened from the long sleep of the Dark Ages, and England was no longer a world to itself, as it had been before the Norman Conquest, but an integral portion of the great western commonwealth.

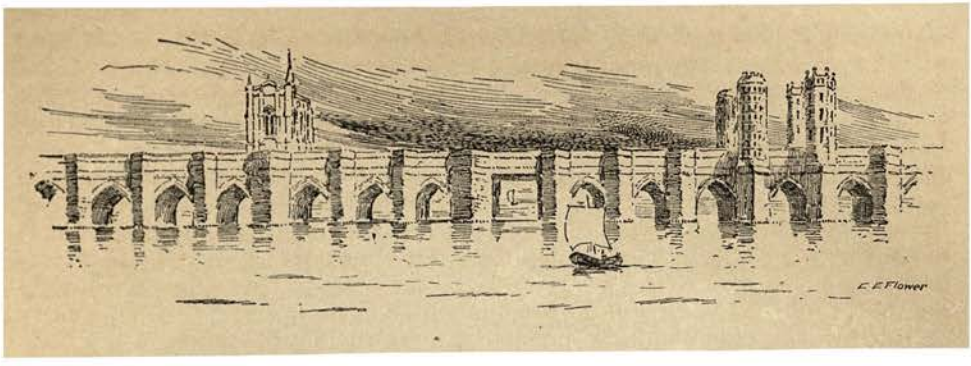
While the better sides of the general tendencies of the age quickened the life and thought of England, she had so much experience of its grosser aspects as to pride herself upon her insularity and look down upon foreigners with contempt. Reaction from the foreign favourites and foreign churchmen sharpened the patriotic instincts of the nation, as can be seen most clearly by readers of Matthew Paris, the first historian of our country who was a convinced, and even narrow, patriot in the modern sense. Thus the age of Henry III. saw the growth of strong English national feeling. The political separation between England the bulk of the English king's French dominions, brought about by the folly of John, completed the long process which made the Norman nobles Englishmen, who, if they continued to speak French, were proud of their insular fatherland, and scarcely conscious of their alien ancestry. The struggle against John for winning the Great Charter had united Englishmen of all ranks in a common object as they had never been united before: and thus helped to further the growth of national sentiment. The weakness of John's son, though fruitful of much mischief, at least stimulated the idea of opposition. A King so incompetent could not be a despot, and the ideas of constitutional monarchy and baronial control of the crown, necessarily fostered during the long minority, were further developed by the futility of Henry's later reign. Even the administrative experiments of the first half of the thirteenth century bear witness to the fertility of the age in new ideas. The system of strengthening the baronial council or parliament of magnates by the chosen representatives of the shire Courts, and ultimately also by spokesmen of the cities and boroughs and by proctors of the lower clergy, grew up gradually and imperceptibly during the middle and later years of Henry's reign without any one realising its political importance or its enormous possibilities. It is to new movements such as these that we must appeal as a proof that the political barrenness of the age was by no means so complete as at first sight it appears. It only needed the removal of the king and his surroundings for the political progress of England to match its religious, intellectual, artistic, and economic development.

At last the cup of the King's iniquities ran over, and in the Oxford Parliament of 1258 the baronage was united in putting an end to the follies that had culminated in Henry's vain and expensive quest of the Sicilian throne for his son. The Provisions of Oxford, the work of this assembly, were in substance a plan for the expulsion of the foreigners and the setting up of a new constitution by which the royal authority was to be transferred from the incompetent King to a committee of fifteen barons, assisted by various other special committees chosen for particular purposes. Henry, who had alienated every class of his subjects, had no choice but to give in his submission. The worst of the aliens were expelled, and the new constitution soon fell into working order. It was a bold attempt to anticipate the modern ideal of a king who reigns without governing. Unluckily neither the age nor the men of the age were favourable for the success of such an attempt. Henry was too jealous and self-conscious to give more than a verbal adhesion to the new system, and soon began to intrigue against it. His disaffection was the more important since by his side now stood his eldest son Edward, a youth of strong character and rare energy, schooled by an early training in Wales and Gascony to appreciate his father's shortcomings, and eager to reassert the full claims of the monarchy. The mass of the barons as represented well enough by Richard of Clare, Earl of Gloucester, a man of limited insight,

narrow sympathy and more character than intelligence. The ablest of the baronage Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, was looked upon with suspicion as a foreigner. He came to England as a French adventurer of high rank in quest of an English earldom. He won the King's goodwill and married Henry's sister, and was made governor of Gascony. But his stern rule of the disorderly province irritated the Gascons and Henry, giving ear to their loudly voiced complaints, cancelled his commission. In doing this the King made his brother-in-law his enemy for life and drove him into the ranks of the opposition. But with all his ability it was only slowly that Simon was able to assume a position of leadership.

To the average baron the battle was won on the King's submission. Little regard was paid to the vague promises which the barons had made of bringing about further improvements in the laws for the benefit of the whole nation. Both Edward and Montfort were quick to see the error of the oligarchical party, and for a short time it seemed as if the more liberal royalist element might successfully co-operate with the broader baronial element. Personal animosities soon prevented such a union of antagonistic parties: but the King's concessions procured for him a following and enabled him in a few years to go to war against his barons, just as the concessions of Charles I. to the Long Parliament, made it possible for that King to wage on equal terms the Great Civil War against the Puritans. In 1258 Henry had all his subjects against him and could do nothing; by 1263 he had a strong party on his side, and, with papal approval, could venture to repudiate the Provisions and resume the personal exercise of his authority. When appeal was made to the sword, the stronger heads in each faction took the lead. Not Henry but Edward was the true leader of the royalists; on Gloucester's death Montfort became the soul of the baronial host; in both cases the stronger element was also the wiser and the more liberal. After various vicissitudes, Montfort achieved a temporary triumph at Lewes, and was able to shew his grasp of principle and clearness of vision in such memorable movements as the Parliament of January, 1265, which, if not, as has been often said, the First House of Commons, marked the first occasion when barons and bishops, knights of the shire and burgesses sat side by side to deal not with details of administration and taxation, but with political matters of the greatest weight and urgency. All the future constitutional system of England was involved in Montfort's resolution to take the people into partnership with the barons in his great effort to curb the power of the crown. But the violent self-seeking of the strenuous leader and his kinsmen, the jealousy of the more conservative of the baronage, the natural reaction in favour of the old King and the warlike skill of his gallant son combined to make Montfort's power of brief duration. Simon was vanquished and slain by Edward at Evesham in 1265, and two years later the last embers of civil strife burnt themselves out. Henry was restored to his old dignity if not to his old power. But he was broken in health and spirits, and henceforth the real controlling influence was Edward. All Montfort's associates were involved in his fall, save only his Welsh ally, Llewelyn, who came out of the strife as the acknowledged prince of all Wales. But there survived much of Montfort's spirit in Montfort's conqueror, and the real inheritor of his work was Edward himself. When the old King at last died, Edward set himself to complete the building up of the English nation, and of the English constitution. The raw materials for their erection were given to him in the great creative age of his early trials: and all that he had to do was to define, to

regulate and to systematize. The complete working out of the principles of the Barons' Wars was thus reserved for the reign of the greatest of the Plantagenets, whose prudence prevented the fall of Montfort from resulting in mere reaction, and whose marvellous activity as monarch brought the political development of England fully abreast of the rapid progress in all things other than politics, which is the special characteristic of the reign of Henry III. Thus regarded, the reign of Edward is but the complement of the reign of his father. Taken together the two reigns resulted in the making of the England, and of the English Constitution which after ages have known.



CHAPTER X

THE REIGN OF HENRY III

[1216–1272 A. D.]

> IT was a newly awakened burst of national feeling which placed Henry III on the throne, and every event of his long and weary reign tended to draw out that national feeling in more definite shapes, and to draw all the sons of the soil, of whatever race and whatever rank, close together in one body, as fellow workers in the great strife against pope and king.—FREEMAN.[b]

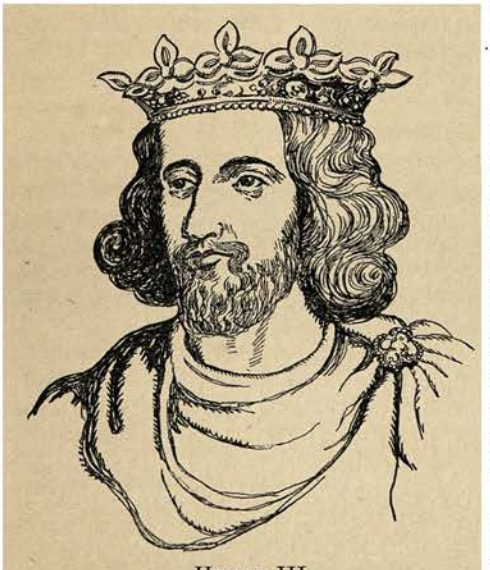
HENRY of Winchester had just completed his tenth year when he found himself, by the sudden death of his father, in possession of the title but with little of the power of a king. In the capital and the opulent provinces of the south of England Louis reigned almost without an opponent; in the other counties his partisans were the more active, and his cause the more popular; and on the west and north the princes of Wales and the king of Scotland had acknowledged his authority and become his vassals. Still the son of John could depend on the swords of the barons and foreigners, who had remained faithful to his father, on the powerful protection of the holy see, on the wavering disposition of the natives who adhered to his rival, and on the pity which would naturally be excited by his youth and innocence.

On the tenth day after the decease of the late monarch he was led to the abbey church of Gloucester, and, having taken the oath usually administered to the English kings, and sworn fealty to Pope Honorius, was crowned by the legate Gualo, and the bishops of Winchester, Exeter, and Bath; who placed on his temples a plain circle of gold in lieu of the crown, which had been lost with the rest of the royal treasures. The next day a proclamation was issued, in which the new king, lamenting the dissension between his father and the barons, a dissension which he would forever dismiss from his memory, promised to all his subjects a full amnesty for the past and their lawful liberties for the future; required the tenants of the crown to do homage and swear fealty to himself as their legitimate sovereign; and forbade any person to appear in public during the next month without a white fillet round the head in honour of his coronation. The care of his person was intrusted to the earl of Pembroke, earl marshal, with the title of guardian of the kingdom.

REPUBLICATION OF MAGNA CHARTA

A great council had been summoned to meet in a fortnight at Bristol, and was attended by all the bishops and abbots, by several earls and barons, and by many knights, who took the oath of allegiance and performed the feudal ceremony of homage. But the great object of the meeting was to reconcile the claims of the crown with those of the subject, to satisfy the demands of the adverse barons, without trenching too deeply on the royal prerogative. For this purpose the Great Charter was revised, and cut down from 63 chapters to 42. Every clause of a temporary nature, or which personally regarded the late king and his opponents, was struck out.

Several clauses were omitted which appeared to bear hard on the ancient claims of the crown; particularly those which related to the right of levying aids and scutages, and of convoking the great council; which abolished the abuses of forests and foresters, warrens and warreners, sheriffs, bailiffs, and other royal officers; which required notice to be given to the relations before the marriage of the heir; which granted the liberty of egress out of, and ingress into the kingdom; and which allowed the goods of persons dying intestate to be divided among their relations after the payment of their just debts. But it was distinctly stated that these provisions had not been repealed. Their operation was only suspended till they could be submitted to the consideration of a full assembly of the barons of both parties.



HENRY III
(1207–1272)

Some improvements were introduced; the lord was forbidden to assume the custody of the person and lands of the heir, till he had received the homage of his ward; because, before that homage, he was not bound to defend the interest of his vassal. All the provisions respecting wardships were extended to the custody of vacant benefices, with this exception—that such custody should not be sold. The rate at which carriages might be taken for the king's use was fixed; and some regulations were added respecting the payment of his debts. The ratification of the charter in this form was received with gratitude by the royalists; nor was it violently condemned by their opponents, when they learned that the clauses which had been omitted were still reserved for future discussion.

If Louis had rejoiced at the death of John, he now discovered that the son would prove a more formidable competitor than the father. The youth and innocence of Henry excited universal compassion. John indeed, it was said, had been a tyrant; but what crime had the prince committed that he should forfeit the crown to which he was born? His rival was a Frenchman, who daily betrayed an unjust partiality in favour of his countrymen. Even now, while his success depended on the efforts of his English adherents, many

[1216-1217 A.D.]

a native saw with indignation the honours which he claimed as a right bestowed as a reward by this foreign prince on his foreign retainers. To aid such favourable impressions, and to foment the jealousy and discontent of their adversaries, became the policy of Gualo and Pembroke.[1]

To all who returned to their allegiance their former liberties were confirmed; tales of the arrogance of the French, and of their contempt for the natives, were industriously circulated; the report of a conspiracy against the chief of the English nobility was revived and believed; and the minds of men were awed and confounded by the weekly repetition of the excommunication fulminated against Louis and his adherents. Neither did the pontiff forget the interests of his young vassal. By his letters he stimulated the zeal of the legate, and sought to awaken sentiments of loyalty in the barons. To justify their rebellion, he observed that they had formerly alleged the tyranny of John; but that plea must now be abandoned. The tyranny of John had perished with the tyrant; and, if they persisted to oppose the succession of his son, they would prove that their former assertions were but pretences, and that they had been actuated by motives which they were ashamed to avow. By these means a revolution was gradually wrought in the public mind to the advantage of Henry; and the hopes of the royalists were cheered by the return of the earl of Salisbury and of several knights, who came to swear fealty to their native sovereign. Even William D'Albiney, as soon as he had recovered his liberty by the payment of 6,000 marks, unfurled the royal standard.

THE BATTLE OF LINCOLN AND DEFEAT OF THE FRENCH FLEET (1217 A.D.)

Louis had at last raised the siege of Dover, and, to compensate himself for the loss of his time at the foot of that fortress, had taken the two castles of Hertford and Berkhampstead. Pembroke surrendered to him two others, as the price of a truce till the festival of Easter—a suspension of hostilities equally useful to both parties. The French prince employed the interval to revisit the Continent and collect a numerous band of auxiliaries; the marshal profited by his absence to detach more of the confederates from his interests.

At the termination of the armistice hostilities recommenced with the siege of Montsorel by the royalists. To relieve the fortress, the confederate army, to the number of six hundred knights and twenty thousand men, marched from London under the command of the count of Perche. Its route was marked by every kind of excess, particularly on the part of the foreign infantry. The royalists did not await their approach; and the confederates, instead of pursuing the fugitives, entered Lincoln amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants, and besieged the castle, which was gallantly defended by a celebrated heroine, Nichola de Camville. Pembroke immediately summoned the tenants of the crown to meet him at Newark, and was able to number among his followers four hundred knights with their esquires, two hundred and fifty crossbow-men, and a numerous body of infantry. Three days were employed in marshalling the army. The legate exhorted the soldiers to fight for their God, their king, and their country; excommunicated all their oppo-

[1 "Louis' party," says Stubbs,[c] "had only one point of union—the hatred and distrust inspired by John; and when John was once removed, the disruption of the party and the expulsion of Louis were sure to come in time. It was certain that all real national feeling would take part against a foreign king."]

nents; and imparted to the combatants the privileges usually granted to the crusaders. They marched from Newark in seven divisions with white crosses sewed on their breasts; the bowmen kept a mile in advance, and the baggage a mile in the rear. This disposition deceived the confederates, who, taking the baggage for a second army, unwisely shut themselves up within the walls, and at the same time, by way of bravado, made a brisk assault on the castle. But the bowmen, who had been admitted by a postern into the fortress, thinned with their arrows the ranks of the assailants, and, by killing the horses of the knights, laid them in their armour on the ground. The rest of the royalists, wheeling round, burst open after a sharp conflict the northern gate; and at the same moment a sortie was made from the castle.

Dismay and confusion now spread through the ranks of the barons. The most spirited, unable to withstand the torrent that rushed into the city, were carried before it; the crowd ran to the opposite portal, but the narrow and winding passage was soon choked, and the fugitives were compelled to recoil on the pursuers. The meaner combatants met with no mercy; but little noble blood was spilled by the victors, who, prompted by relationship or the hope of ransom, sought not to slay but to capture their enemies. The count of Perche alone lost his life. He fought in a churchyard till his horse was killed; and when a voice called out to him to accept of quarter, he replied with an oath that he would never surrender to an English traitor. Irritated by the reproach, a soldier thrust his pike through the eye of the count's visor, into his brain. The number of the captives amounted to three earls, eleven barons, and four hundred knights. Two hundred others escaped by different roads to London; the foot soldiers, seeking to follow them, were massacred by the inhabitants of the villages which lay in their route.

This victory, which secured the crown on the head of the young king, was called, in the quaint language of the time, the "fair of Lincoln." As soon as resistance ceased, the city, which had long been distinguished by its attachment to the barons, was given up to pillage. Even the privileges of the churches could not save them from the rapacity of the royalists. But the fate of the women and children was more deplorable. When the gate was forced, they crowded for security into the boats on the river. Some sank under the weight, others were lost by mismanagement, and of the fugitives the greater part were drowned.

The destruction of his army confined Louis within the walls of London, where, though he had built up all the gates except one, and had compelled the citizens to renew their oaths of allegiance, he was perpetually alarmed with the discovery of conspiracies against him. His only hope rested on the exertions of his consort, Blanche of Castile, who in person solicited aid from the most powerful of the French nobles. At length an armament of eighty large vessels, besides galleys and smaller ships, put to sea from Calais under the command of the celebrated pirate Eustace the Monk. To oppose this formidable fleet Hubert de Burgh, the justiciar, had collected forty sail from the Cinque Ports; but the disparity of force was so alarming that several knights refused to embark, under the pretence that they were not acquainted with the manner of naval engagements.

Nor was Hubert himself unaware of the danger. Before his departure he gave the most positive orders that the castle of Dover should not be surrendered to the enemy on any terms, not even to save his own life, in the event of his being made prisoner. The English were soon in sight of the French, sailed past them, as if their object were to surprise Calais, and suddenly tacking bore down in a line on their rear. The bowmen and archers began

[1217 A.D.]

the engagement with a volley of arrows; as soon as the ships came in contact, they were fastened together with chains and hooks; powder of quicklime was scattered in the air, that it might be carried by the wind into the eyes of the enemy; and the English, leaping on board with axes in their hands, rendered the ships unmanageable by cutting the rigging. The French, unaccustomed to this manner of fighting, made but a feeble resistance, and only fifteen vessels out of the whole number escaped. One hundred and fifteen knights with their esquires, and more than eight hundred inferior officers, were taken. Eustace, who had secreted himself in the hold of his ship, offered a large sum for his ransom; but Richard Fitzroy, one of John's illegitimate children by a daughter of the earl Warenne, spurned the proposal, and instantly struck off his head, which was afterwards carried on a pole from town to town as a proof of the victory.

ENGLAND AFTER THE TREATY OF LAMBETH (1217 A.D.)

With this fleet perished the hopes of Louis, who, on the approach of the royal army, gladly accepted the offer of an accommodation made by the legate and the earl marshal. It was agreed [by the articles of a treaty drawn up at Lambeth] that he should give back to the English barons their fealty and homage, and then Henry should grant to them a full amnesty on their return to their allegiance; that peace on similar terms should be offered by Henry to the king of Scots and the prince of Wales; and that arrangement should be made for the discharge of debts and the ransom and liberation of prisoners of war. This is what appears on the face of the instrument interchanged between the parties; but in addition Henry paid to Louis the sum of 10,000 marks to enable him to discharge his debts; and Louis made, so we are told, a promise to Henry, confirmed by oath, that on his accession to the French throne he would restore all the provinces which formerly belonged to Henry's father: a promise which indeed was the most that could be given by a prince not yet in possession, but which it was plain that he would not have the will, when he came into possession, or, if he had the will, would not have the power to execute. After the departure of Louis with his countrymen, the king of Scotland was the first to take advantage of the pacification. He "came to the faith and service" of the young king, and did his devoir to him at Northampton. Llewelyn after some hesitation followed his example, and did homage to his sovereign lord at Worcester.

The departure of Louis secured the crown to Henry; but the young king had not a single relation to whom he could recur for advice or to whom he might intrust the care of his interests. Even the queen mother, who by her misconduct had already forfeited the confidence of the nation, abandoned her son to hasten back to France and marry her former lover, the count de la Marche. But Pope Honorius, as feudal superior, declared himself the guardian of the orphan, and commanded Gualo to reside near his person, watch over his safety, and protect his just rights. The legate discharged his trust with fidelity, and found in the earl marshal a coadjutor actuated by the same zeal and concurring in the same sentiments. The itinerant justices were ordered to summon all knights and freemen to their courts, and to administer to them an oath that they would keep the king's peace, observe the good laws and rightful customs of the realm, and at command of the king and council assemble and oppose the enemies of the king and kingdom.

The charter was again confirmed, but with additional alterations.[1] It was provided that the widow should have for her dower the third part of all the lands which had belonged to her husband during the coverture, unless she had been endowed with a smaller portion at the door of the church; that no freeman should lawfully alienate so much of his land as to render himself incapable of performing his services to the lord of the fee; and, as a check on alienations in mortmain, that no one should give his lands to a religious house, to hold it again of the same house; nor, on the other hand, should any religious house receive lands, to lease them out to the donor. Assizes of darrein presentment were sent back to the justices of the bench; the county courts were ordered to be held only once a month, the sheriff's tourn only twice in the year, and the view of frankpledge only at Michaelmas.

Lastly, it was enacted that all men should enjoy equal liberties; that escuage or scutage should be levied in the same manner as in the reign of Henry II; and that every castle built or rebuilt since the commencement of the civil war should be demolished immediately. At the same time the chapters regarding the forests and warrens were withdrawn, to form a new instrument, called the Charter of Forests. By this all forests enclosed since the death of King Richard were thrown open; all outlawries for offences of the forest incurred within the same period were reversed; the punishment for killing the king's venison was commuted into a heavy fine or a year's imprisonment; the courts of the foresters were regulated, unjust tolls abolished, and the right to cultivate and improve their own lands was confirmed to the holders of estates within the royal forests. In addition, to prevent the diminution of the revenue, a law was passed prohibiting the king's ministers, during his minority, to put the great seal to any charter or letter of confirmation or sale, or alienation, or gift in perpetuity, and declaring beforehand all such instruments invalid and of no effect.

The late contest had generated a spirit of insubordination, which bore with impatience the restraint of legitimate authority, and the legate and marshal sought to heal these wounds by conciliation. By degrees tranquillity was restored, and in the autumn Gualo returned to Rome. He was succeeded by Pandulf, who followed the example of his predecessor, and watched with solicitude over the interests of the young king. His presence was rendered the more necessary by the death of Pembroke, the earl marshal (1219); after which the exercise of the royal authority was intrusted to Hubert de Burgh, the justiciar, and the custody of the royal person to Peter des Roches, bishop of Winchester. With the former the reader is already acquainted; Des Roches was a Poitevin, who had enjoyed the confidence of John, and more than once had been appointed by him guardian of the kingdom.

These ministers were rivals: if the justiciar possessed a greater share of power, the bishop enjoyed more opportunities of cultivating the friendship of his pupil; and, while the one sought the support of the native families, the other proclaimed himself the protector of the foreigners whom the policy of John had settled in the island. The presence of Pandulf was a constant check on the ambition of these rivals; by his letters and speeches he reproved their negligence and stimulated their industry; and by his advice the justiciar and chancellor were made to swear that during the minority they would not dispose of any of the great fiefs of the crown. He repaired to Wales, and

[1 This may be regarded as the end of the first phase of the struggle over the Magna Charta. Stubbs[c] points this well by saying: "It was now become permanently the palladium of English constitutional liberty; it was recognised as the salvation of king and kingdom, and the legate, instead of anathematising, had turned and blessed it."]

restored peace on the borders; he met the king of Scots at York, and negotiated a peace between the two kingdoms; and by his letters and services he greatly contributed to prolong the truce between England and France. As doubts had been raised respecting the coronation at Gloucester, that ceremony was again performed (1220) with the accustomed solemnity by the archbishop, who, with the permission of Honorius, had returned to England; and the next year (1221) Alexander of Scotland married, at York, Joan, the elder of the two sisters of Henry, and did homage to his brother-in-law. Margaret, one of the Scottish princesses, who had so long been in the custody of the English crown, was married to Hubert. Pandulf immediately returned to Rome.[1]

During the contest between John and the barons that prince had lavishly distributed the crown lands among his partisans, as well foreigners as natives; and those who had the command of the royal castles at his death pertinaciously refused to give them up to the government, alleging that they kept them in trust for the king during his minority. To wrest these fortresses from the hands of the powerful vassals who held them was an important but difficult object. The bishop of Winchester and the justiciar demanded from the holders all escheats and wardships; and at last solemnly declared, at the request and with the assent of the great council, that Henry was of sufficient age to have the free disposal of his lands, castles, and wards, though not to plead or be impleaded in courts of justice. Hubert, in the king's name, demanded the surrender of the wards and castles.[d]

The first noteworthy resistance was met with from William, earl of Aumale, or Albemarle, whose grandfather of the same name in a like situation had resisted Henry II in the early years of his reign. The earl now refused to surrender Rockingham to the king, on Hubert's demand, and an armed force was at once despatched to take it from him. The earl and his followers fled, but later, in 1221, he seized two more royal castles, and it was only after a fierce struggle, in which both the excommunication of the church and the strong hand of the earl marshal were resorted to, that he was subdued and banished. The second serious attempt at resistance had the more important result of ridding the country at once of Falkes de Breauté, one of the most obnoxious of the foreigners who were attracted to the island by John's gold; and of Peter des Roches, the bishop of Winchester, who betook himself to the Continent as a result of the triumph of his rival Hubert. In 1224 Falkes seized one of the king's justices, who had decided against him at the assizes at Dunstable, and imprisoned him in the castle of Bedford, which he held. Hubert gladly grasped at the opportunity of chastising one whom Des Roches looked to as a strong supporter of his policy, and Bedford was besieged by an army, which was nominally commanded by the young king in person, and after a stout resistance forced to capitulate. Falkes, who had managed to escape, was captured in Coventry and banished.[a]

The consequences of the improvident grants made by the last two monarchs now began to unfold themselves. Under the pretence of resisting an invasion threatened by the king of France, Henry assembled a great council (1225) and most urgently demanded an aid. The demand was at first refused; but the wants of the crown would admit of no delay; and, after some

[1 While Pandulf undoubtedly, like Gualo before him, exercised a very considerable influence in the affairs of the realm during these years, Lingard,[d] through dislike of Hubert, probably exaggerates it. In 1220 Langton obtained from the pope a promise that during his life there should be no other legate in England, and this Pandulf apparently regarded as his own recall. Therefore, having secured an election to the see of Norwich, he resigned his legatine office in 1221.]

negotiation, it was stipulated that a fifteenth of all movables should be granted, but on the condition that the two charters should be solemnly ratified. They had already been confirmed twice since the commencement of his reign; but the king's officers had laughed at their confirmation, and refused to carry their provisions into effect. Now, however, it was no longer necessary for the barons to take up arms; poverty had subdued the reluctance of the king and his ministers, and the two charters were solemnly ratified in that form which they have ever since retained.[d]

In the month of April (1225), Richard, earl of Cornwall, the king's brother, was sent to Guienne, under the guidance of the earl of Salisbury, with an English army. But the French king had taken the cross against the Albigenses. A papal legate interfered, threatened the English with excommunication if they raised obstacles to Louis in his holy war, and at last made both parties agree to a truce for one year. Before the term expired the French king died at Paris, after a brief reign of three years, and was succeeded by his son Louis IX, who was only in his twelfth year. A stormy minority ensued; and Henry, who was now twenty years of age, might have taken advantage of it had his character and his own circumstances been somewhat different. The armistice was subsequently renewed year after year, the English never recovering La Rochelle, and the French making no further progress of importance.

THE FALL OF HUBERT DE BURGH (1229 A.D.)

It was at length, however, resolved to carry war into France. Henry was twenty-two years old, Louis only fifteen; but Blanche, the mother of the latter prince, and regent, put the kingdom into a position of defence. When Henry went to Portsmouth, he found that the shipping provided was not sufficient to carry over his army, and after a violent altercation with Hubert de Burgh, who was accused of being the cause of this deficiency, the expedition was given up till the following year. At length the English king set sail for the Continent, and landed at St. Malo, in Brittany, where he was joined by a host of Bretons. He advanced to Nantes, where, like his father before him, he wasted his time and his means in feasts and pageantries. In the mean time young Louis, accompanied by his mother, took several towns belonging to Henry. In the beginning of October the English king returned home, covered with disgrace; and his ally, the duke of Brittany, was obliged to appear at the foot of the throne of Louis with a rope round his neck. De Burgh had accompanied his master on this expedition; and in spite of his known honour, bravery, and ability, the king attempted to throw all the blame of the miserable failure upon Hubert. The people, however, took a different view of the case, and set Henry down as a trifler and a coward. When he applied to parliament for a further grant of money, and complained of the poverty to which his French expedition had reduced him, they refused the aid.

Hubert had now (1232) been eight years at the head of affairs. He enjoyed the good opinion of the people, whom he had never wantonly oppressed; but many of the nobles envied him his power, and hated him for his zeal in resuming the castles and other possessions of the crown. But the proverbial ingratitude of princes was fostered in the present case by other circumstances, the most cogent of all being that the minister was rich and the king woefully in want of money. On a sudden, Hubert saw his old rival Peter des Roches

[1232-1233 A.D.]

reappear at court, and he must have felt from that moment that his ruin was concerted. In fact, very soon after, Henry threw off his faithful guardian and able minister and left him to the persecutions of his enemies. The frivolous charges brought against Hubert lead to a conviction that he was guilty of no breach of trust or abuse of authority. Among other things, he was accused of winning the affections of the king by means of magic and enchantment. The fallen minister took refuge in Merton abbey.

His flight gave unwonted courage to the king, who vapoured and stormed, and then commanded the mayor of London to force the asylum and seize Hubert dead or alive. The mayor set forth; but the king, being reminded by the archbishop of Dublin of the illegality and sacrilegiousness of such a procedure, despatched messengers in a great hurry and recalled him. Hubert obtained a delay of four months, that he might prepare for his defence, and the king gave him a safe-conduct. Relying on this, De Burgh departed to visit his wife, the Scottish princess, at Bury St. Edmunds; but he had scarcely begun his journey when the king, notwithstanding his plighted faith, sent Sir Godfrey de Crancumb to surprise and seize him. Hubert contrived to escape to a parish church.

His furious enemies, however, were not deterred by any considerations, and bursting into the church with drawn swords they dragged him forth, and sent for a smith to make shackles for him. The poor artisan, struck with the sad state of the great man, and moved with generous feelings, said he would rather die the worst of deaths than forge fetters for the brave defender of Dover castle and the conqueror of the French at sea. But Sir Godfrey placed the earl on horseback, naked, and, tying his feet under the girths, so conveyed him to the Tower of London. As soon as this violation of sanctuary was known, an outcry was raised by the bishops; and the king was in consequence obliged to order those who had seized him to carry the prisoner back to the parish church; but at the same time he commanded the sheriff of Essex, on pain of death, to prevent the earl's escape, and to compel him to an unconditional surrender. The sheriff dug a deep trench round the sanctuary, erected palisades, and effectually prevented all ingress or egress. Thus cut off from every communication, unprovided with fuel and proper clothing (the winter was setting in), and at last left without provisions, Hubert de Burgh came forth, on the fortieth day of his beleaguerment, and surrendered to the "black band," who again carried him to the Tower of London. A few days after, Henry ordered him to be released, and to appear before the court of his peers.

When Hubert appeared in court in the midst of his enemies, he declined pleading: some were urgent for a sentence of death, but the king proposed an award which was finally adopted by all parties. Hubert forfeited to the crown all such lands as had been granted him in the time of King John, or been obtained by him, by purchase or otherwise, under Henry. He retained for himself and his heirs the property he had inherited from his family, together with some estates he held in fief of mesne lords. Thus clipped and shorn, the brave Hubert was committed to the castle of Devizes. Within these walls Hubert remained for nearly a year, when he was induced to adopt a desperate mode of escape, by learning that the custody of the castle had just been given to a dependent of his bitter enemy the Poitevin bishop of Winchester. In a dark night he climbed over the battlements and dropped from the high wall into the moat. From the moat he made his way to a country church; but there he was presently surrounded by an armed band, led on by the sheriff. Circumstances, however, were materially altered:

several of the barons who had before been intent on the destruction of the minister, were now at open war with the king, and anxious to secure the co-operation of so able a man as De Burgh. A strong body of horse released him from the hands of his captors and carried him off into Wales, where the insurgent nobles were then assembled. Some eighteen months later, when peace was restored, Hubert received back his estates and honours: he was even readmitted into the king's council; but he had the wisdom never again to aspire to the dangerous post of chief minister.

THE REVIVAL OF FOREIGN INFLUENCES

Peter des Roches, who succeeded to power on the first displacement and captivity of Hubert, soon rendered himself odious to all classes of the nation. He encouraged the king's growing antipathy to the English barons and to Magna Charta; and he crowded the court, the offices of government, the royal fortresses, with hosts of hungry Poitevins, Gascons, and other Frenchmen, who ruled and wasted at their pleasure. The nature of an opposition, constitutional and legal in all its operations, was as yet a discovery to be made. The barons withdrew and took up arms. When again summoned, they answered that unless the king dismissed his Poitevins and the other foreigners, they would drive both them and him out of the kingdom.

Peter des Roches averted his ruin for the present by sowing dissensions among the English nobles. Several battles or skirmishes, which defy anything like a clear narration, were fought in the heart of England and on the Welsh borders. Richard Marshal, earl of Pembroke,[1] the son of the virtuous protector to whom King Henry was so deeply indebted, was treacherously and most barbarously murdered; and, following up his temporary success, the Poitevin bishop confiscated the estates of several of the English nobles without any legal trial, and bestowed them on adventurers from his own land. Edmund Rich the new archbishop of Canterbury, who had succeeded Langton, took up the national cause, and threatened the king with excommunication if he did not instantly dismiss Des Roches and his associates. Henry trembled and complied: the foreigners were banished, and the archbishop for a short time governed the land with great prudence, and according to the charters.

Henry now married (1236) Eleanor of Provence, who came to England with a numerous retinue, and was soon followed by fresh swarms of foreigners. William, the bishop of Valence, the queen's maternal uncle, was made chief minister. Boniface of Savoy, another uncle, was promoted to the see of Canterbury; and Peter, a third uncle, was invested with the earldom of Richmond, and received the profitable wardship of the earl of Warenne. The queen invited over damsels from Provence, and the king married them to the young nobles of England of whom he had the wardship. This was bad enough, but it was not all: the queen-mother, Isabella, whom the nation detested, had now four sons by the count de la Marche, and she sent over all four—Guy, William, Geoffrey, and Aymer—to be provided for in England.

[1 Richard Marshal was a man of unusual ability, an accomplished knight, and a lover and patron of learning. After the return of Peter des Roches, the earl suggested and delivered in person both the refusal of the barons to sit in the same council with Peter, and their positive demand for the dismissal of the foreign officials. This opposition was construed as treason; the king marched against him, and drove him into alliance with the Welsh borderers. Peter lured him by stratagem over to Ireland, where he was murdered. For many years after his death (1234) the barons were without a strong leader.]

The king heaped honours and riches upon these half-brothers, who were soon followed by new herds of adventurers from Guienne.

Henry's resources were soon exhausted, and he found himself without money and without credit. When he asked aids from the parliament, the parliament told him that he must dismiss the foreigners, who devoured the substance of the land; and they several times voted him small supplies, on the express condition that he should so do, and also redress other grievances; but he forgot his promises as soon as he got the money. The barons then bound him by oath; and Henry took the oaths, broke them, and acted just as before.

Isabella, the queen-mother, added alike to the odium in which she was held by the English, and to the embarrassments and unpopularity of her son, by hurrying him into a war with France (1242). Louis, now in the prime of manhood, was loved and respected by his subjects; whereas Henry was despised by his. When the English parliament was called upon for a supply of men and money, they resolutely refused both. Henry contrived to fill thirty hogsheads with silver, and, sailing from Portsmouth with his queen, his brother Richard, and three hundred knights, he made for the river Garonne. Soon after his landing he was joined by nearly twenty thousand men, some his own vassals, some who were anxious, not to re-establish the supremacy of the English king in the south, but to render themselves independent of the crown of France at his expense.

Louis met Henry with a superior force on the banks of the river Charente, in Saintonge, and defeated him in a pitched battle near Taillebourg. The English king retreated down the river to the town of Saintes, where he was beaten in a second battle, fought on the very next day. His mother's husband, the count de la Marche, who had led him into this disastrous campaign, then abandoned him, and made his own terms with the French king. Henry fled from Saintes across Saintonge, to Blaye. A terrible dysentery which broke out in his army, some scruples of conscience, and the singular moderation of his own views, prevented Louis from following up his successes, and induced him to agree to a truce for five years.

HENRY AND HIS PARLIAMENTS

When Henry met his parliament in 1244 he found it more refractory than it had ever been. In reply to his demands for money, they taxed him with extravagance, with his frequent breaches of the Great Charter; they told him, in short, that they would no longer trust him, and that they must have in their own hands the appointment of the chief justiciar, the chancellor, and other great officers. The king would consent to nothing more than another ratification of Magna Charta, and therefore the parliament would only vote him twenty shillings on each knight's fee for the marriage of his eldest daughter to the Scottish king. After this he looked to a meeting of parliament as a meeting of his personal enemies, and to avoid it he raised money by stretching his prerogative in respect to fines, benevolences, purveyances, and the other undefinable branches of the ancient revenue. He also tormented and ransacked the Jews; and he begged, besides, from town to town, from castle to castle, until he obtained the reputation of being the sturdiest beggar in all England. In the year 1248 he was again obliged to meet his barons in parliament. They now told him that he ought to blush to ask aid from his people whom he professed to hate, and whom he shunned for the society

of aliens; they reproached him with disparaging the nobles of England by forcing them into mean marriages with foreigners. They enlarged upon the abuse of the right of purveyance, telling him that foreign merchants, knowing the dangers to which their goods were exposed, shunned the ports of England as if they were in possession of pirates; that the poor fishermen of the coast, finding they could not escape his hungry purveyors and courtiers, were frequently obliged to carry their fish to the other side of the Channel. In reply to the remonstrance of his barons, Henry gave nothing but fair promises which could no longer deceive, and he got nothing save the cutting reproof to which he had been obliged to listen.

The king now racked his imagination in devising pretexts on which to obtain what he wanted. At one time he said he was resolved to reconquer all the continental dominions of the crown; but, unfortunately, all men knew that Louis had departed for the East, and that Henry had contracted the most solemn obligations not to make war upon him during his crusade. He next took the cross himself, pretending to be anxious to sail for Palestine forthwith; but here again it was well known he had no such intention, and only wanted money to pay his debts and satisfy his foreign favourites. At a moment of urgent necessity he was advised to sell all his plate and jewels. "Who will buy them?" said he. His advisers answered, "The citizens of London, of course." He rejoined bitterly, "By my troth, if the treasures of Augustus were put up to sale, the citizens would be the purchasers! These clowns, who assume the style of barons, abound in all things, while we are wanting in common necessaries." It is said that the king was thenceforth more inimical and rapacious towards the Londoners than he had been before. To annoy them and touch them in a sensitive part, he established a new fair at Westminster, to last fifteen days, during which all trading was prohibited in London. He went to keep his Christmas in the city, and let loose his purveyors among the inhabitants; he made them offer New Year's gifts; and shortly after, in spite of remonstrances, he compelled them to pay him the sum of £2,000, by the most open violation of law and right.

In 1253 Henry was again obliged to meet his parliament, and this he did, averring to all men that he only wanted a proper Christian aid that he might go and recover the tomb of Christ. If he thought that this old pretence would gain unlimited confidence he was deceived. The barons, who had been duped so often, treated his application with coldness and contempt; but they at last held out the hope of a liberal grant on condition of his consenting to a fresh and most solemn confirmation of their liberties. On the third day of May the king went to Westminster hall, where the barons, prelates, and abbots were assembled. The bishops and abbots were apparelled in their canonical robes, and every one of them held a burning taper in his hand. A taper was offered to the king, but he refused it, saying he was no priest. Then the archbishop of Canterbury stood up before the people and denounced sentence of excommunication against all those who should, either directly or indirectly, infringe the charters of the kingdom. Every striking, every terrific part of this ceremony was performed: the prelates and abbots dashed their tapers to the ground, and as the lights went out in smoke, they exclaimed, "May the soul of everyone who incurs this sentence so stink and be extinguished in hell!" The king subjoined, on his own behalf, "So help me God! I will keep these charters inviolate, as I am a man, as I am a Christian, as I am a knight, and as I am a king crowned and anointed!" His outward behaviour during this awful performance was exemplary; he held his hand on his heart, and made his countenance express a devout acquiescence;

but the ceremony was scarcely over when, following the impulse given him by his foreign favourites, he returned to his old courses, and thus utterly uprooted whatever confidence the nation yet had in him.

With the money thus obtained Henry went to Guienne, where Alfonso, the king of Castile, had set up a claim to the earldom, and induced many of the fickle nobles to revolt against the English crown. This expedition was less dishonourable than the former ones; indeed, it was successful on the whole, and led to a friendly alliance between England and Castile—Prince Edward marrying Eleanor, the daughter of Alfonso. But Henry concealed these arrangements for some time, in order to obtain a fresh grant from his parliament, under colour of carrying on the war. He returned penniless; for the partial re-establishment of his authority in the south of France seems never to have benefited his exchequer. The expedients to which he had recourse in England rendered him more and more odious and contemptible. When his fortunes were at this low ebb, he blindly embarked in a project to raise one of his sons to the throne of the Two Sicilies. On the death of Frederick II, who died excommunicated, Pope Innocent IV offered the crown to Henry for his second son, Prince Edmund. Henry was placed in circumstances in which he could do little, and, wavering and timid, he did nothing at all, except give his son the empty title of king of Sicily. The pope ordered the English clergy to lend money for the expedition, and even to pawn the property of their church to obtain it.

Backed by the pope, Henry levied enormous contributions on the churches of England and Ireland. The native clergy were already disaffected, but these proceedings made them as openly hostile to the king as were the lay barons. The wholesale spoliation of the church had also the effect of lessening the clergy's reverence for the pope, and of shaking that power which had already attained its highest pitch, and which was thenceforward gradually to decline. The bishop of London said that the pope and king were, indeed, more powerful than he, but if they took his mitre from his head, he would clap on a warrior's helmet. The legate, Rustan, moderated his demands and withdrew, fully convinced that a storm was approaching and that the Sicilian speculation had completed the ruin of the bankrupt king. As long as his brother Richard, the great earl of Cornwall,[1] remained in England, and in possession of the treasures he had hoarded, there was a powerful check upon insurrection; for though the earl's abilities in public affairs seem hardly to have been equal to his wealth, still the influence he possessed in the nation was most extensive. He had repeatedly opposed the illegal courses of the king, and had even been out in arms with the barons more than once; but he was averse to extreme measures, and, from his position, not likely to permit any invasion of the just prerogative of the crown. The Germans were setting up their empire for sale, and Richard's vanity and ambition induced him to become a purchaser. Having spent immense sums, he was elected, in the beginning of 1256, as "king of the Romans," which was considered the sure step to the dignity of emperor. But there was a schism among the electors, part of whom, a few weeks later, gave their suffrages to Alfonso, king of Cas-

[1 Richard of Cornwall, king of the Romans, the second son of John, was a man of considerably more energy and ability than his brother Henry. He had much of the political sagacity of his nephew Edward, and, like him, at times acted with the baronial opposition in resisting Henry's foolish designs. "A more careful view of his career," says Stubbs,[c] "leads to the conclusion that both his abilities and his success were underrated. As an English earl we find him always acting as a mediator and arbitrator, never urging the king to his deceitful and despotic courses. He was the wisest and most moderate, it would seem, of Henry's advisers."]

tile. Richard, however, went over to the Continent, was crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle, and left the crown of England to be dragged through the mire.

A scarcity of provisions disposed the people to desperate measures. On the 2d of May (1258) Henry called a parliament at Westminster. The barons went to the hall in complete armour. As the king entered there was a rattling of swords; his eye glanced timidly along the mailed ranks, and he said, with a faltering voice, "What means this? Am I a prisoner?" "Not so," replied Roger Bigod; "but your foreign favourites and your own extravagance have involved this realm in great wretchedness; wherefore we demand that the powers of government be intrusted and made over to a committee of bishops and barons, that the same may root up abuses and enact good laws." One of the king's foreign half-brothers vapoured and talked loudly, but as for himself, he could do nothing else than give an unconditional assent to the demands of the barons, who thereupon promised that, if he proved sincere, they would help him to pay his debts and prosecute the claims of his son in Italy. The parliament then dissolved, appointing an early day to meet again at Oxford, where the committee of government should be appointed, and the affairs of the state finally adjusted.

SIMON DE MONTFORT; THE MAD PARLIAMENT

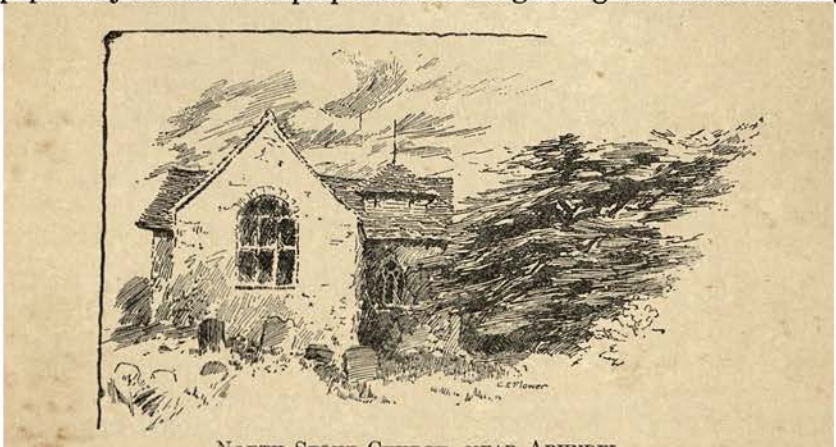
The present leader of the barons, and in all respects the most remarkable man among them, was the earl of Leicester. It is evident that the monkish chroniclers were incapable of understanding or properly appreciating the extraordinary character of this foreign champion for English liberties; and those writers have scarcely left materials to enable us to form an accurate judgment. Simon de Montfort was the youngest son of the count Simon de Montfort in France, who had gained an unhappy celebrity in the barbarous crusades against the Albigenses. In right of his mother, Amicia, he had succeeded to the earldom of Leicester; but he appears to have been little known in England until the year 1238, when he came over from his native country, and married Eleanor, the countess-dowager of Pembroke, a sister of King Henry. This match was carried by the royal favour and authority; for Richard, earl of Cornwall, the king's brother, and many of the English barons, tried to prevent it, on the ground that it was not fitting a princess should be married to a foreign subject.

But the earl had no sooner secured his marriage, and made himself known in the country, than he set himself forward as the decided opponent of foreign encroachment and foreign favourites of all kinds; and such was his ability that he caused people to overlook the anomaly of his position, and to forget that he himself was a foreigner. He not only captivated the good will of the English nobles, but endeared himself in an extraordinary degree to the English people, whose worth and importance in the state he certainly seems to have been one of the first to discover and count upon. His devotional feelings (which, upon no ground that we can discover, have been regarded as hypocritical) gained him the favour of the clergy; his literary acquirements, so unusual in those times, increased his influence and reputation. There seems to be no good reason for refusing him the merits of a skilful politician; and he was a master of the art of war as it was then understood and practised.

The favour of the king was soon turned into a hatred as bitter as Henry's supine and not cruel nature was capable of: it seemed monstrous that a foreigner should be, not a courtier but the popular idol; and Leicester was

[1258 A.D.]

banished the court. He was afterwards intrusted with the government of Guienne, where, if he did not achieve the impossibility of giving entire satisfaction to the turbulent and intriguing nobles, he did good service to the king his master, and acquitted himself with ability and honour. Henry, however, was weak enough to listen to the complaints of some of his southern vassals, who did not relish the firm rule of the earl. Leicester was hastily recalled, and his master called him traitor to his face. Thus insulted by a man he despised, the earl gave the lie to his sovereign, and told him that, but for his kingly rank, he would make him repent the wrong he had done him. This happened in 1252. Leicester withdrew for a season into France, but Henry was soon reconciled, in appearance, and the earl returned to England, where his popularity increased in proportion to the growing weakness and misgov-



NORTH STOKE CHURCH, NEAR ARUNDEL
(Thirteenth Century)

ernment of the king. He was one of the armed barons that met in Westminster hall, and now he was ready to follow up those demonstrations at Oxford.

On the 11th of June the parliament, which the royalists called the Mad Parliament, met at Oxford. Having no reliance on the king, who had so often broken both promise and oath, the great barons summoned all who owed them military service to attend in arms on the occasion. Thus secured from the attack of the foreigners in the king's pay, they proceeded to their object with great vigour and determination. The committee of government was appointed without a murmur on the part of the timid Henry; it consisted of twenty-four members, twelve of whom were chosen by the barons and twelve by the king. The king's choice fell upon his nephew Henry, the son of Richard, the titular king of the Romans; upon Guy and William, his own half-brothers; the bishops of London and Winchester; the earls of Warwick and Warenne; the abbots of Westminster and St. Martin's, London; on John Mansel, a friar; and Peter of Savoy, a relation of the queen. The members appointed by the barons were the bishop of Worcester; the earls Simon of Leicester, Richard of Gloucester, Humphrey of Hereford, Roger of Norfolk, earl marshal; the lords Roger Mortimer, John Fitzgeoffrey, Hugh Bigod, Richard de Grey, William Bardolf, Peter de Montfort, and Hugh le Despenser.

The earl of Leicester was at the head of this supreme council, to the maintenance of whose ordinances the king, and afterwards his son Edward, took

a solemn oath. The parliament then proceeded to enact that four knights should be chosen by the votes of the freeholders in each county, to lay before the parliament all breaches of law and justice that might occur; that a new sheriff should be annually chosen by the freeholders in each county; and that three sessions of parliament should be held regularly every year: the first, eight days after Michaelmas; the second, the morrow after Candlemas Day; and the third, on the first day of June.

The benefits derived from the acts of this parliament were prospective rather than immediate, for the first consequences were seven or eight years of anarchy and confusion, the fruits of insincerity and discontent on the part of the court, and of ambition and intrigue on the part of the great barons. Prince Edward, the heir to the throne, the earl of Warenne, and others took the oaths to the Statutes or Provisions of Oxford with unconcealed reluctance and ill-humour. Though their leaders were liberally included among the twenty-four guardians of the kingdom, the foreign faction was excessively dissatisfied with the recent changes, and said openly, and wherever they went, that the acts of Oxford ought to be set aside as illegal and degrading to the king's majesty. Irritated by their opposition and their secret intrigues, Leicester and his party scared the four half-brothers of the king and a herd of their relations and retainers out of the kingdom. The departure of these foreigners increased the popularity of the barons with the English people; but they were seduced by the temptations of ambition and an easy triumph over all opposition; they filled up the posts vacated in the committee of government with their own adherents, leaving scarcely a member in it to represent the king; and they finally lodged the whole authority of government in the hands of their council of state and a standing committee of twelve persons. This great power was abused, as all unlimited power, whether held by a king, or an oligarchy, or a democracy, ever will be, and the barons soon disagreed among themselves.

QUARREL BETWEEN LEICESTER AND GLOUCESTER

About six months after the meeting at Oxford (1259), Richard, king of the Romans, having spent all his money among the Germans, was anxious to return to England that he might get more. At St. Omer he was met by a messenger from Leicester, who told him that he must not set foot in the kingdom unless he swore beforehand to observe the Provisions of Oxford. Richard finally gave an ungracious assent: he took the oath, joined his brother, and immediately commenced organising an opposition to the committee of government. Soon after his arrival it was seen that the barons disagreed more than ever. The earl of Gloucester started up as a rival to Leicester, and a violent quarrel—the first of many—broke out between these two powerful lords. Then there was presented a petition from the knights of shires or counties, complaining that the barons had held possession of the sovereign authority for eighteen months, and had done no good in the way of reform. A few improvements, chiefly regarding the administration of justice, were then enacted; but their slender amount did not satisfy the nation, and most of the barons were more anxious for the prolongation of their own powers and profits than for anything else.

By degrees two factions were formed in the committee: when that of Gloucester obtained the ascendancy, Leicester withdrew into France. Then Gloucester would have reconciled himself with the king, but as soon as Prince

Edward saw this he declared for Leicester, who returned. The manœuvres and intrigues of party now become almost as unintelligible as they are uninteresting; reconciliations and breaches between the Leicester and Gloucester factions, and then between the barons generally and the court, a changing and a changing again of sides and principles, perplex and disgrace a scene where nothing seems fixed except Leicester's dislike and distrust of the king, and a general but somewhat vague affection among the barons of both parties for the provisions of Magna Charta.

Henry, who had long rejoiced at the division among the barons, now (1261) thought the moment was come for escaping from their authority. He had a papal dispensation in his pocket for the oaths he had taken at Oxford, and this set his conscience quite at ease. On the 2d of February he ventured to tell the committee of government that, seeing the abuse they had made of their authority, he should henceforward govern without them. He then hastened to the Tower, which had recently been repaired and strengthened, and seized all the money in the mint. From behind those strong walls he ordered that the gates of London should be closed, and that all the citizens should swear fresh fealty to him.

The barons called out their vassals and marched upon the capital. Prince Edward was amusing himself in France at a tournament, and it was agreed by both parties to await his arrival. He came in haste, and, instead of joining his father in the Tower, joined the barons. In spite of this junction—or perhaps we ought rather to say, in consequence of it—many of the nobles went over and joined the king, who published the pope's bull of dispensation, together with a manifesto in which he set forth that he had reigned forty-five years in peace and according to justice, never committing such deeds of wrong and violence as the barons had recently committed. For a time he met with success, and Leicester returned once more to France, vowing that he would never trust the faith of a perjured king.

In 1263 another change and shifting of parts took place. The earl of Gloucester was dead, and his son, a very young man, instead of being the rival became for a while the bosom friend of Leicester. Prince Edward, on the other hand, veered round to the court, and had made himself unpopular by calling in a foreign guard. In the month of March young Gloucester called his retainers and confederates together at Oxford, and the earl of Leicester returned to England in the month of April, and put himself at their head. The great earl at once raised the banner of war, and after taking several royal castles and towns, marched rapidly upon London, where the mayor and the common people declared for him. The king was safe in the Tower; Prince Edward fled to Windsor castle, and the queen, his mother, attempted to escape by water in the same direction; but when she approached London bridge, a cry ran among the populace, who hated her, of "Drown the witch!" and filth and stones were thrown at the barge. The mayor took pity on her, and carried her for safety to St. Paul's.

Richard of Cornwall contrived to effect a hollow reconciliation between the barons and his unwarlike brother, who yielded everything, only reserving to himself the usual resource of breaking his compact as soon as circumstances should seem favourable. It is true his subjects had repeatedly exacted too much, but it is equally certain that he never made the smallest concession to them in good faith, and with a determination to respect it. Foreigners were once more banished the kingdom, and the custody of the royal castles was again intrusted to Leicester and his associates. Peace and amity were sworn in July; but by the month of October the king was in arms against the

barons, and nearly succeeded in taking Leicester prisoner. This new crisis was mainly attributable to a condition exacted by that great earl—that the authority of the committee of government should not only last for the lifetime of the king, but be prolonged during the reign of his successor. Up to this point Prince Edward had pretended a great respect for his oath, professing to doubt whether an absolution from Rome could excuse perjury, and he had frequently protested that, having sworn to the Provisions of Oxford, he would religiously keep that vow; but this last measure removed all his scruples, and denouncing the barons as rebels, traitors, and usurpers, he openly declared against them and all their statutes.

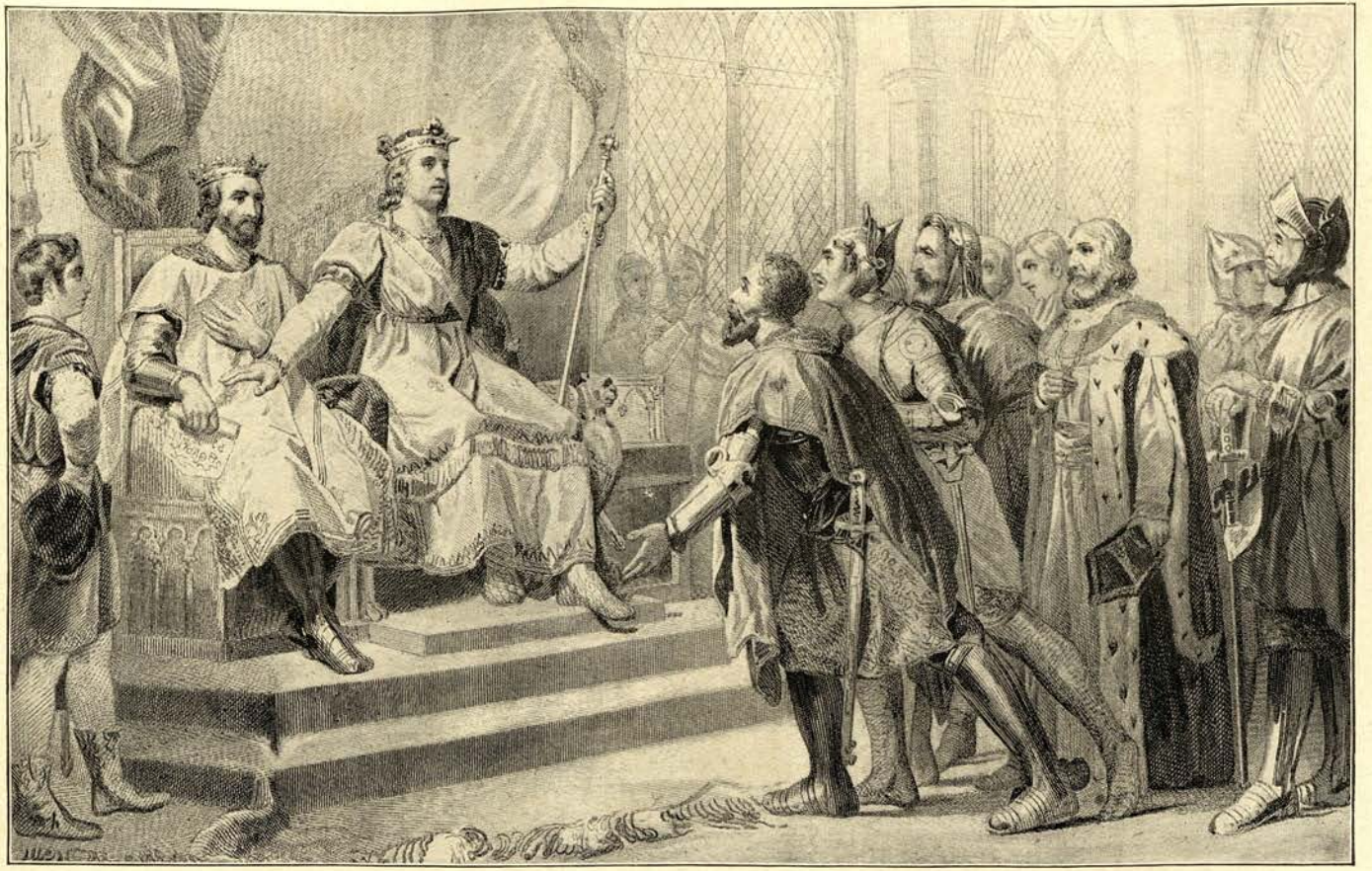
To stop the horrors of a civil war, some of the bishops induced both parties to refer their differences to the arbitration of the French king (1264). The conscientious and justice-loving Louis IX pronounced his award in the beginning of February (1264). He insisted on the observance of the Great Charter; but otherwise his decision was in favour of the king, as he set aside the Provisions of Oxford, ordered that the royal castles should be restored, and that the sovereign should have full power of choosing his own ministers and officers, whether from among foreigners or natives. The barons, who were better acquainted than Louis with the character of their king, well knew that if the securities they had exacted were all given up, the provisions of the national charters would be despised, as they were previously to the parliament of Oxford; and they therefore resolved not to be bound by the award, which, they insisted, had been obtained through the unfair influence of the wife of Louis, who was sister-in-law to King Henry.

The civil war was therefore renewed with more fury than ever. The strength of the royalists lay in the counties of the north and the extreme west; that of the barons in the midland counties, the southeast, the Cinque Ports, and, above all, in the city of London and its neighbourhood. At the tolling of the great bell of St. Paul's the citizens of London assembled as an armed host. In the midst of this excitement they fell upon the unfortunate Jews, and, after plundering them, massacred above five hundred—men, women, and children—in cold blood. In other parts of the kingdom the royalists robbed and murdered the Jews under pretext of their being friends to the barons; and the barons' party did the like, alleging that they were allied with the king, and that they kept Greek fire hid in their houses in order to destroy the friends of liberty.

THE BATTLE OF LEWES; DE MONTFORT'S GOVERNMENT (1264 A.D.)

The opening of the campaign was in favour of the royalists; but their fortunes changed when they advanced to the southern coast and endeavoured to win over the powerful Cinque Ports. Leicester, who had remained quietly in London organising his forces, at length marched from the capital with the resolution of fighting a decisive battle. He found the king at Lewes, in Sussex—a bad position, in a hollow—which Henry, relying on his superiority of numbers, did not quit on the earl's approach. Leicester encamped on the downs about two miles from Lewes. On the following morning, the 14th of May, leaving a strong reserve on the downs, he descended into the hollow.

The two armies soon joined battle. On the king's side were the great houses of Bigod and Bohun, all the foreigners in the kingdom, the Percys with their warlike borderers, and from beyond the borders John Comyn, John de Baliol,



ST. LOUIS MEDIATING BETWEEN KING HENRY III OF ENGLAND AND HIS BARONS, 1264 A.D.

(From the engraving by T. M. Fontaine of the painting by Georges Rouget in the Museum of Versailles)

[1264 A.D.]

and Robert de Bruce—names that were soon to appear in a very different drama. On the earl's side were Gloucester, Derby, Warenne, the Despensers, Robert de Roos, William Marmion, Richard de Grey, John Fitzjohn, Nicholas Seagrave, Godfrey de Lucy, John de Vescy, and others of noble lineage and great estates. Prince Edward, who was destined to acquire the rudiments of war in the slaughter of his own subjects, began the battle by falling desperately upon a body of Londoners, who had followed Leicester to the field. This burgher militia could not stand against the trained cavalry of the prince, who chased and slew them by heaps. Eager to take a bloody vengeance for the insults the Londoners had offered his mother, Edward spurred forward, regardless of the manœuvres of the other divisions of the royalist army. He was as yet a young soldier, and the experienced and skilful leader of the barons made him pay dearly for his mistake. Leicester made a concentrated attack on the king, beat him most completely, and took him prisoner, with his brother, the king of the Romans, John Comyn, and Robert de Bruce, before the prince returned from his headlong pursuit. When Edward arrived at the field of battle, he saw it covered with the slain of his own party, and learned that his father, with many nobles, was in Leicester's hands and shut up in the priory of Lewes. Before he could recover himself he was charged by a body of horse and made prisoner. The king's half-brothers, who were again in England, fled to Pevensey, whence they escaped to the Continent.

The victory of the barons does not seem to have been disgraced by cruelty, but it is said to have cost the lives of more than five thousand Englishmen, who fell on the field. On the following morning a treaty, or the *Mise* of Lewes, as it was called, was concluded. It was agreed that Edward and his cousin Henry, the son of the king of the Romans, should remain as hostages for their fathers, and that the whole quarrel should be again submitted to a peaceful arbitration. But Leicester, who had now the right of the strongest, kept both the king and his brother prisoners as well as their sons, and, feeling his own greatness, began to be less tractable. Although the pope excommunicated him and his party, the people regarded the sentence with indifference; and many of the native clergy, who had long been disgusted both with pope and king, praised him in their sermons as the reformer of abuses, the protector of the oppressed, the father of the poor, the saviour of his country, the avenger of the church. Thus supported, and indeed carried forward by a boundless popularity, he soon forced all such barons as held out for the king to surrender their castles and submit to the judgment of their peers. These men were condemned merely to short periods of exile in Ireland; not one suffered death, or chains, or forfeiture.

Every act of government was still performed in the name of the king, whose captivity was made so light as to be scarcely apparent, and who was treated with every outward demonstration of respect. The queen had retired to the Continent before the battle of Lewes, and having busied herself in collecting a host of foreign mercenaries, she now lay at Damme, in Flanders, almost ready to cross over and renew the civil war. The steps taken by Leicester show at once his entire confidence in the good will of the nation, and his personal bravery and activity. He summoned the whole force of the country—from castles and towns, cities and boroughs—to meet in arms on Barham Downs, and having encamped them there he threw himself among the mariners of England, and, taking the command of a fleet, cruised between the English and Flemish coasts to meet the invaders at sea. But the queen's fleet never ventured out of port, her land forces disbanded, and that enterprise fell to the ground.

The ruin of Leicester was effected by very different means. Confident in his talents and popularity, he ventured to display too marked a superiority above his fellows in the same cause; this excited hostile feelings in several of the barons, whose jealousies and pretensions were skilfully worked upon by Prince Edward, who had by this time been removed from Dover castle, into which he had been thrown after the battle of Lewes, and placed, with his father, in the enjoyment of considerable personal liberty, by the order of a parliament which Leicester had summoned expressly to consider his case, in the beginning of the year 1265, which is memorable in the history of the constitution as the first in which we have certain evidence of the appearance of representatives from the cities and boroughs.[e]

Simon de Montfort, at the very moment of his fall, set the example of an extensive reformation in the frame of parliament, which, though his authority was not acknowledged by the punctilious adherents to the letter and forms of law, was afterwards legally adopted by Edward, and rendered the parliament of that year the model of the British parliament, and in a considerable degree affected the constitution of all other representative assemblies. It may, indeed, be considered as the practical discovery of popular representation. The particulars of the war are faintly discerned at the distance of six or seven centuries. The reformation of parliament, which first afforded proof from experience that liberty, order, greatness, power, and wealth are capable of being blended together in a degree of harmony which the wisest men had not before believed to be possible, will be held in everlasting remembrance.[m]

The earl of Derby opened a correspondence with the prince, and the earl of Gloucester set himself up as a rival to Montfort, and then, by means of his brother, Thomas de Clare, who had been placed about the prince's person, concerted a plan for releasing Edward. This plan was successful; and on Thursday in Whitsunweek the prince escaped on a fleet horse which had been conveyed to him, and joined the earl of Gloucester at Ludlow, where the royal banner was raised. The prince was made to swear that he would respect the charters, govern according to law, and expel foreigners; and it was upon these express conditions that Gloucester surrendered to him the command of the troops. This earl was a vain, weak young man, but his jealous fury against Leicester could not blind him to the obvious fact that but few of the nobility would make any sacrifices for the royal cause unless their attachment to constitutional liberty were gratified by such pledges.

THE BATTLE OF EVESHAM (1265 A.D.)

About the same time the earl of Warenne, who had escaped from the battle of Lewes, landed in South Wales with 120 knights and a troop of archers; and other royalist chiefs rose in different parts of the country, according to a plan which seems to have been suggested by the military sagacity of Prince Edward. The earl of Leicester, keeping good hold of the king, remained at Hereford, while his eldest son, Simon de Montfort, with a part of his army, was in Sussex. The object of the prince was to prevent the junction of these separated forces, and to keep the earl on the right bank of the Severn. Edward destroyed all the bridges and boats on that river and secured the fords; but, after some skilful manœuvres, the earl crossed the Severn and encamped near Worcester, where he expected his son would join him.

But Simon's conduct in war was not equal to his father's, for he allowed himself to be surprised by night near Kenilworth, where Edward took his

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horses and treasure, and most of his knights, and forced him to take refuge, almost naked, in the castle there, the principal residence of the De Montfort family. The earl, still hoping to meet his son's forces, advanced to Evesham, on the river Avon. On the morning of the 4th of August, as he looked towards the hills in the direction of Kenilworth, he saw his own standards advancing. His joy, however, was but momentary; for he discovered, when too late to retreat, that they were his son's banners in the hands of his enemies, and, nearly at the same time, he saw the heads of columns showing themselves on either flank and in his rear. These well-conceived combined movements had been executed with unusual precision: the earl was surrounded—every road was blocked up. As he observed the skilful way in which the hostile forces were disposed, he uttered the complaint so often used by old generals, "They have learned from me the art of war"; and then, it is said, he added, "The Lord have mercy on our souls, for I see our bodies are Prince Edward's." He did not, however, neglect the duties of the commander, but marshalled his men in the best manner. He then spent a short time in prayer and took the sacrament, as was his wont, before going into battle.

Having failed in an attempt to force the road to Kenilworth, he formed in a solid circle on the summit of a hill, and several times repulsed the charges of his foes, who gradually closed round him, attacking at all points. The king, being in the earl's camp when the royalists appeared, was encased in armour which concealed his features and put upon a war-horse. In one of the charges the imbecile old man was dismounted, and in danger of being slain, but he cried out, "Hold your hand! I am Harry of Winchester," and the prince, who happened to be near, ran to his rescue and carried him out of the *mêlée*. Leicester's horse was killed under him, but the earl rose unhurt from his fall and fought bravely on foot. A body of Welsh were broken and fled, and the number of his enemies still seemed to increase on all sides. He then asked the royalists if they gave quarter, and was told that there was no quarter for traitors. His gallant son Henry was killed before his eyes, the bravest and best of his friends fell in heaps around him, and at last the great earl himself died with his sword in his hand.

The hatred of the royalists was too much inflamed to admit of the humanities of usages of chivalry. No prisoners were taken; the slaughter, usually confined to the "meaner sort," who could not pay ransom, was extended to the noblest and wealthiest, and all the barons and knights of Leicester's party, to the number of 180, were despatched. After the battle the corpse of Leicester was brutally mangled, and treated with every kind of indignity; but by the people his memory was affectionately cherished, and long after he was spoken of among them under the title of Sir Simon the Righteous.[e]

THE CHARACTER OF SIMON DE MONTFORT

"The man who gave to English freedom," says Freeman,[b] "its second and more lasting shape, the hero and martyr of England in the greatest of her constitutional struggles, was Simon de Montfort." His most recent biographer, Prothero,[h] has well said that a juster estimate of his personal character can be reached by a simple review of his actions, than by any sort of analysis of what we to-day think the man must necessarily have been who achieved the great things that Simon did.[a]

"Nothing is more difficult," wrote Dr. Robert Henry,[i] "than to form a just idea of the character of this illustrious person who was abhorred as a

devil by one half of England, and adored as a saint or guardian angel by the other. He was unquestionably one of the greatest generals and politicians of his age: bold, ambitious, and enterprising, ever considered by friends and enemies as the very soul of the party which he espoused."

These words are true, but they contain only half the truth. He was more than a great general, more than a great politician, far more than a mere party leader, inasmuch as he obeyed to the death that ruling principle which his own words expressed, "I would rather die without a foot of land than break the oath that I have made." This was why he was worshipped as a saint and a martyr; and if we smile at the popular superstition which believed in the miracles wrought at his tomb, we can look up to the popular instinct which recognised in him that rarest of all miracles, a true patriot. The form of government which he set up, and the constitutional measures he adopted to strengthen it, sufficiently disprove the assertion that he used the pretext of reform to cover the designs of a purely selfish ambition. The fact that he never aimed at supreme power, in spite of the insults and injuries he received at the hands of Henry, until it became evident that in no other way could justice be done, acquits him of the charge of traitorous disloyalty to his king. The fact that he was the only one of the greater nobles who remained true to his cause shows how far he was above the prejudices of class, and what temptations he had to surmount before he left the common rut in which his peers were content to move, and marked out for himself the nobler and more dangerous course to which duty called him. A conviction of his own honesty of purpose, a firm faith that the right would triumph, as well as an overweening confidence in his own powers, led him to persevere in that course to the end, and to essay the impossible. He failed, but he was fortunate in that he did not live to feel the bitterness of failure.[h]

The value and permanency of the great earl's work have by no one been better set forth than by the pen of England's greatest constitutional historian, Bishop Stubbs.[i] "Had he lived longer," says Stubbs, "the prospect of the throne might have opened before him, and he might have become a destroyer instead of a saviour." He could by no chance have made a better king than Edward; and had he failed, according to this somewhat paradoxical view, England would have been subjected to greater dangers from the very virtues of Edward than from the vices of his father; since the one would probably have attained, whereas the other only aimed at, the powers of a despot. Stubbs believes that the idea of representative government ripened under Simon's hand; and that he was "one of the first to see the uses and the glories to which it would ultimately grow." This must not, however, be taken as confirmatory of Hume's statement that the House of Commons was planned by his hand. Representative institutions of England were doubtless helped forward, but quite as surely were not created, by him. But the painstaking labours that have made this evident have served, on the other hand, to bring into clearer light the fact that Simon de Montfort was at all times a consistent defender of the rights of the governed.[a]

If in his public life he cannot be altogether freed from blame, his private life was beyond reproach. A blameless husband, a kind, too kind, father, a constant friend—he was the model of a Christian knight and gentleman. That he was the best hated as he was the best loved man of his day is but natural. His character was one calculated to offend as many as it attracted. In a rough age, one may perhaps say in political matters in every age, no one can do great things without some ambition, some imperiousness, some selfishness, if one is to stamp with that name the necessary self-assertion of a strong

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character. Who shall say in what proportion these are to be mingled with other and nobler attributes—sympathy, devotion, uprightness, perseverance, energy, faith? No man is faultless, and he was no exception to the rule; but if any faults can be said to ennoble a character, they are those of Simon de Montfort.

A man of Simon's greatness was naturally much written about by contemporary writers. One of the best of these estimates, that of Rishanger,[k] the monk of St. Albans, we give in conclusion:

"He was indeed a mighty man, and prudent, and circumspect; in the use of arms and in experience of warfare superior to all others of his time; commendably endowed with knowledge of letters; fond of hearing the offices of the church by day and night; sparing of food and drink, as those who were about him saw with their own eyes; in time of night watching more than he slept, as his more intimate friends have oft related. In the greatest difficulties which he went through while handling affairs of state, he was found trustworthy; notably in Gascony, whither he went by command of the king, and there subdued to the king's majesty rebels beforetime unconquered, and sent them to England to his lord the king. He was, moreover, pleasant and witty in speech, and ever aimed at the reward of an admirable faith; on account of which he did not fear to undergo death, as shall be told hereafter. His constancy all men, even his enemies, admired; for when others had sworn to observe the Provisions of Oxford, and the most part of them despised and rejected that to which they had sworn, he, having once taken the oath, like an immovable pillar stood firm, and neither by threats, nor promises, nor gifts, nor flattery could be moved to depart in any way with the other magnates from the oath which he had taken to reform the state of the realm.

"He commended himself to the prayers of the religious, and humbly, as with brotherly affection, he begged to be allied with them, in the pouring out of prayers to God for the state of the realm and the peace of the church; and he was constant in supplication that divine grace might keep him spotless from avarice and covetousness of earthly things, knowing for a surety that many in those days were encumbered by such vices, as the issue of things afterwards made clear. To the religious and other prelates of the church, commended by honesty of life, he showed all due reverence. The blessed Robert, once bishop of Lincoln, is related to have enjoined upon the earl, for the remission of his sins, that he should take upon himself that cause for which he fought even unto death; declaring that the peace of the English church could never be secured without the temporal sword, and constantly affirming that all who died in her and for her should receive the crown of martyrdom. It is related by trustworthy persons that the bishop once placed his hands on the head of the earl's first-born son, and said to him, 'My dearest son, thou and thy father shall both die on one day and by one hurt, for the cause of justice.' And the earl, like a second Joshua, worshipped justice, as the very medicine of his soul."

THE PERMANENCY OF SIMON'S REFORMS

Though Simon de Montfort was slain, his lifeless remains outraged, his acts branded as those of a usurper, and his name, held in abhorrence by the powerful, was distinguished only by the blessings of the poor and the praise of the learned—yet, in spite of authority and prejudice, his bold and fortunate innovations survived.

When the barons originally took up arms against John they exercised the indisputable right of resistance to oppression. They gave a wholesome warning to sovereigns, and breathed into the hearts of nations a high sense of their rights. But in this first stage they knew not how to improve their victory; they took no securities, and made no lasting provision for the time to come. Both parties might have won successive victory, with no other fruit than alternate tyranny.

In the second stage of the contest the national leaders obtained, in the Great Charter, a solemn recognition of the rights of mankind; and some provisions which, by reserving to a national assembly the power over many taxes, laid the foundation of a permanent and effective control over the crown. Still the means of redressing grievances chiefly lay in an appeal to arms—a coarse and perilous expedient, which, however justifiable by an extreme necessity, is always of uncertain issue, and of which the frequent repetition is incompatible with the peace and order of human society. Such were the plans of government in the Great Charter, the Provisions of Oxford, and the Mise or Agreement of Lewes.

The third epoch is distinguished by the establishment of a permanent assembly, which was on ordinary occasions capable of checking the prerogative by a quiet and constant action, yet strong enough to oppose it more decisively if no other means of preventing tyranny should be left. Hence the unspeakable importance of the new constitution given to parliament by Simon de Montfort. Hence also arose the necessity under which the succeeding king, with all his policy and energy, found himself of adopting this precedent from a hated usurper. It would have been vain to have legally strengthened parliament against the crown, unless it had been actually strengthened by widening its foundations, by rendering it a bond of union between orders of men jealous of each other, and by multiplying its points of contact with the people—the sole allies from whom succour could be hoped. The introduction of knights, citizens, and burgesses into the legislature, by its continuance in circumstances so apparently inauspicious, showed how exactly it suited the necessities and demands of society at that moment. No sooner had events thrown forward the measure, than its fitness to the state of the community became apparent. It is often thus that in the clamours of men for a succession of objects, society, by a sort of elective attraction, seems to select from among them what has an affinity with itself, and what easily combines with it in its state at the time. The enlargement of the basis of the legislature thus stood the test which discriminates visionary prospects from necessary repair and prudent reformation. It would be nowise inconsistent with this view of the subject, if we were to suppose that De Montfort, by this novelty, paid court to the lower orders to gain allies against the nobility—the surmise of one ancient chronicler, eagerly adopted by several modern historians. That he might entertain such a project as a temporary expedient is by no means improbable. To ascribe to him a more extensive foresight would be unreasonable in times better than his. If the supposition could be substantiated, it would only prove more clearly that his ambition was guided by sagacity—that he saw the part of society that was growing in strength, and with which a provident government ought to seek an alliance—that, amidst the noise and confusion of popular complaint, he had learned the art of deciphering its often wayward language, and of discriminating the clamour of a moment from demands rooted in the nature and circumstances of society.[m]

THE RESTORATION OF THE KING

After the decisive victory of Evesham, the king, resuming the sceptre, went to Warwick, where he was joined by his brother, the king of the Romans, who, with many other prisoners taken by Leicester at Lewes, now first recovered his liberty. Early in the next month, on the "feast of the Translation of St. Edward," a parliament assembled at Winchester. Here it was seen that, even in the moment of success, the king could not venture to revoke any part of the Great Charter. His victory had been achieved by the arms of English barons, who, generally speaking, had concurred in the former measures against his faithless government, and whose opposition to the earl of Leicester's too great power had in no sense weakened their love of constitutional safeguards, or their hatred of an absolute king. Led away, however, by personal animosities, the parliament of Winchester passed some severe sentences against the family and partisans of the late earl, and deprived the citizens of London of their charter.

A desperate resistance was thus provoked, and successive insurrections broke out in different parts of the kingdom. Young Simon de Montfort and his associates maintained themselves for a long time in the isles of Ely and Axholme; the Cinque Ports refused to submit; the castle of Kenilworth defied several royal armies; and Adam Gordon, a most warlike baron, maintained himself in the forests of Hampshire. Prince Edward's valour and ability had full occupation for nearly two years, and at last it was found necessary to relax the severity of government, and grant easier terms to the vanquished, in order to obtain the restoration of internal tranquillity. With this view a committee was appointed of twelve bishops and barons, and their award, called the Dictum of Kenilworth, was confirmed by the king and parliament.

The earl of Gloucester, whose personal quarrel with Leicester had been the chief cause of the overthrow of the baronial oligarchy and the restoration of Henry, quarrelled with the king and once more took up arms, alleging that even the Dictum of Kenilworth was too harsh, and that the court was seeking to infringe the Provisions of Oxford, and breaking the promises given on the field of Evesham. The dissatisfied Londoners made common cause with him, and received him within their walls; but, losing heart at the approach of the king's army, Gloucester opened negotiations, and submitted on condition of receiving a full pardon for himself. At the same time the Londoners compounded for a fine of 25,000 marks. The pope most laudably laboured to diffuse the spirit of mercy and moderation; and the gallantry and generosity shown by Prince Edward on one occasion did more in subduing opposition than a hundred executions on the scaffold could have done. In a battle fought in a wood near Alton the prince engaged Adam Gordon hand to hand, and vanquished that redoubtable knight in fair single combat. When Adam was brought to the ground, instead of despatching him, he generously gave him his life. On that very night he introduced him to the queen at Guildford, procured him his pardon, received him into his own especial favour, and was from that time forward most faithfully served by Sir Adam.

On the 18th of November, 1267,[1] two years and three months after the battle of Evesham, the king, in parliament at Marlborough, adopted some of

[1] "It is curious that in the most disturbed period of this turbulent reign, when ignorance seemed to be thickening and the human intellect to decline, there was written and given to the world the best treatise upon law of which England could boast till the publication of Blackstone's *Commentaries* in the middle of the eighteenth century. The author, usually styled Henry de Bracton,[n] has gone by the names of Bryeton, Britton, Briton, Breton, and Brets;

the most valuable of the provisions of the earl of Leicester, and enacted other good laws.[1] Thus all resistance was disarmed, and the patriots, or the outlaws, in the isle of Ely, who were the last to submit, threw down their arms and accepted the conditions of the Dictum of Kenilworth. As soon as the country was thoroughly tranquillised, Prince Edward and his cousin Henry took the cross, in which they were followed by nearly one hundred and fifty English lords and knights.[e]

Historians have been fond of conjecturing as to the causes that could have led to Edward's apparently extraordinary action at this time in going upon a crusade and leaving the kingdom under an aged and weak king in the distracted state that always follows a bitter civil war. Hume[f] thinks that Edward subordinated all else to his love of glory. Knight[g] believes we are too apt to minimise the power of religious enthusiasm. Lingard[d] suggests that there was more of policy than devotion in his conduct. Stubbs[c] inclines to this latter view, and says: "Edward knew that he had made enemies in the late war; a few years would heal the old wounds. He knew that the land was exhausted; a few years' rest would give it time to recruit. If he were likely to be the cause of unrest he were better away; and even if he should not return until he returned as king, he might begin his new career less hampered than he would otherwise have been by the policy of his father."[a]

Having taken many precautionary measures in case his father should die during his absence, and having most wisely obtained the grant of a new charter, with the restoration of their liberties, to the citizens of London, and a free pardon to a few nobles who still lay under the king's ban, Edward departed with his wife Eleanor, his cousin Henry, and his knights, in the month of July, 1270. Many of the choicest chivalry of England left their bones to bleach on the Syrian shore; but the fate of Henry d'Almaine, as they called the son of the king of the Romans, was more tragical, as well as much more unusual. He was assassinated in a church at Viterbo, in Italy, by his two cousins, Simon and Guy de Montfort, who, with their mother, the countess of Leicester, King Henry's own sister, had been driven out of England, and who considered the king of the Romans the bitterest enemy of their house. That vain old man, the king of the Romans, was rejoicing in the possession, or display, of a young German bride, and was still flattering himself with the hopes of the imperial crown when the melancholy catastrophe of his son reminded him of the vanity of human wishes. He did not long survive the shock; he died in the month of December, 1271; and in the following winter his brother, Henry III, followed him to the grave, expiring at Westminster, after a long illness and great demonstrations of piety, on the feast of St. Edmund, the 16th of November, 1272. Henry had lived sixty-eight years, and had been fifty-six years a king—at least in name.[e]

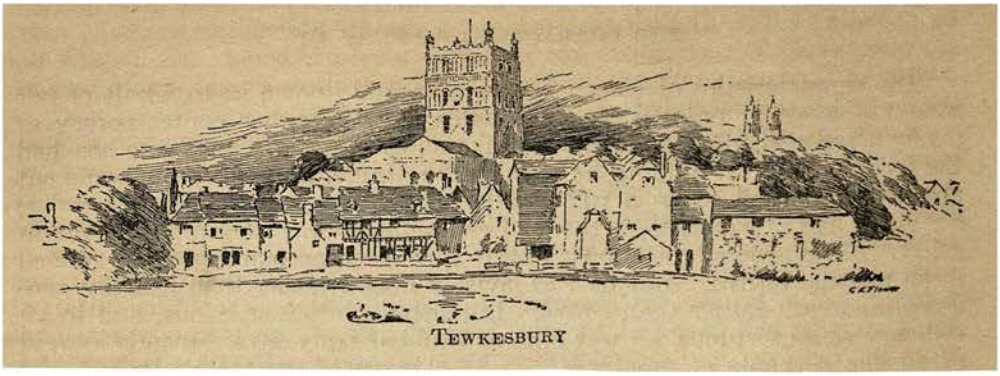
and some have doubted whether all these names are not imaginary. From the elegance of his style, and the familiar knowledge he displays of the Roman law, I cannot doubt that he was an ecclesiastic who had addicted himself to the study of jurisprudence. For comprehensiveness, for lucid arrangement, for logical precision, this author was unrivalled during many ages."—LORD CAMPBELL'S *q* *Lives of the Chancellors.*

[[1] Hallam[p] lays great emphasis on what he calls the "most prominent and characteristic distinction between the constitution of England and that of every other country in Europe"—namely, the refusal of civil privileges to the lower nobility, or gentry. Everywhere else the appellations of nobleman and gentleman are synonymous. In England the law has never taken notice of gentlemen. A comparison of two almost contemporary French and English legal writers, Beaumanoir[o] and Bracton[n], makes clear the distinction between the Continent and England in this respect. The Frenchman ranges the people into three classes: noble, free, and servile; the Englishman into the divisions of freedom and villeinage. On the whole there was a virtual equality of rights among all the commoners of England, while the English peerage in itself imparted no privilege except to its actual possessor.]

THE CHARACTER OF HENRY III

The characteristics of Henry III were so well known as to admit of but little difference of opinion, and estimates of him, either contemporary or modern, are in singular agreement. Like many another prince who has had the fortune, or ill fortune, to be born to the purple, he was by temperament absolutely unfitted to be a ruler. His virtues were of the priestly order; his vices, at the worst, were those of self-indulgence, ill temper, and prodigality. He is generally acknowledged to have been accomplished and refined in an unusual degree. But he was lavishly liberal rather than heartily generous, and rash rather than brave. Impulsive, ambitious, pious, and in an ordinary sense virtuous, he was still, as Stubbs[i] truly says, "utterly devoid of all the elements of greatness." "As a subject," writes Prothero,[l] "he would have been harmless, and even perhaps respectable; as a king he was weak, hasty, imprudent, equally incapable in the position of a ruler, an administrator, or a general."

Seldom has the character of a sovereign had a more important bearing on the events of his reign than Henry's had on his. His follies and weaknesses gave the opportunity for the successors of the barons who had forced the Great Charter from his father at Runnymede to reassert the national liberties there acknowledged, in such firm and enduring form that the mightiest of his successors were never able completely to overthrow them. Stubbs[i] makes a striking comparison between Henry and John. "Unlike his father, who was incapable of receiving any impression," he says, "Henry was so susceptible to impressions that none of them could last long; John's heart was of millstone, Henry's of wax; yet they had in common a certain feminine quality of irresolute pertinacity, which it would be a mockery to call elasticity." [a]



TEWKESBURY

CHAPTER XI

THE REIGN OF EDWARD I

[1272–1307 A.D.]

To strengthen and develop the royal power; to widen the hold of the king on the nation by taking the people themselves into partnership with him in the administration of his inheritance; to work out under happier auspices the great ideas of Montfort, and to turn schemes meant to bring about a revolution into devices for the regular government of the realm; to stand forth, above all, as the truly national king, who ruled through the advice of his own nobles and scorned the foreign favourite and parasite—such were among the main lines of Edward's work as a king.—T. F. TOUT.[b]

EDWARD'S CRUSADE

FROM the abbey church of Westminster the barons, who had attended his father's funeral, went to the new temple and proclaimed the absent Edward by the style of "king of England, lord of Ireland, and duke of Aquitaine." This was on Sunday, the 20th of November, four days after the demise of Henry. A new great seal was made; Walter de Merton was appointed chancellor; Walter Giffard, archbishop of York, the earl of Cornwall, a surviving son of Richard, king of the Romans, and the earl of Gloucester, assumed conjointly the office of guardians or regents of the kingdom; and such wise measures were taken that the public peace was in no way disturbed; and the accession of Edward, though he was far away, and exposed to the chances of war and shipwreck, was more tranquil than that of any preceding king since the Conquest.

When Edward departed on the crusade he found that the French king, instead of sailing for Syria or Palestine, had turned aside to attack the Mussulman bey of Tunis. Louis landed on the African shore in the midst of summer, and took the camp and town of Carthage; but the king himself was attacked by a fatal dysentery, and he laid himself down to die among the ruins of ancient Carthage. When Prince Edward arrived, he found that Louis was dead, and that more than half of his army had perished by disease. The survivors had, however, made advantageous terms with the bey of Tunis,

[1272 A.D.]

and showed little inclination to leave that country and encounter fresh dangers in Palestine. The English then recrossed the Mediterranean to Sicily; but Edward would not renounce his project, or return home. He passed the winter at Trapani, vowing that, though all his soldiers should desert him, he would go to Acre attended only by Fowen, his groom.

Early in the following spring he set sail from Sicily, and landed at Acre, which was now almost the only residue of the crusaders' conquests in the East, with a force which did not exceed one thousand men. But the fame of Richard was still bright on those shores; and while the Mohammedans trembled, the Christians gathered round the standard of the successor of Lion Heart, to whom Edward was scarcely inferior in physical strength and courage, while he was his superior in coolness and policy. The sultan of Babylon, who had prepared to take Acre by assault, immediately retreated from its vicinity, and crossing the desert went into Egypt. Edward advanced, and obtained temporary possession of Nazareth, which was taken by storm. The prince, and many of the English with him, were soon after attacked with sickness, and returned to Acre, where they lingered some fifteen months, doing little or nothing; for the first enthusiasm among the Latin Christians had subsided upon seeing that Edward had scarcely any money, and received no reinforcements.

The Mohammedans were not strong enough to attack Acre, which was so fortified as to be enabled to defy them for twenty years longer, when the Mamelukes of Egypt took it and drove the crusaders and their descendants from every part of the Holy Land. Edward on his side was always too weak to attempt any extensive operations. His presence, however, both annoyed and distressed the Turks, and an attempt was made to get rid of him by assassination. The emir of Jaffa, under pretence of embracing the Christian religion, opened a correspondence with the English prince, and gradually gained his confidence. The emir sent letters and presents, till his messengers were allowed to pass and repass without examination or suspicion. On the Friday of Whitsunweek, about the hour of vespers, as Edward was reclining on a couch, with nothing on him but a loose robe, the emir's messenger made his usual salaam at the door of his apartment: he was admitted; and as he knelt and presented a letter with one hand, he drew a concealed dagger with the other and aimed a blow at the prince's heart. Edward, though wounded, caught the murderer in his iron grasp, threw him to the ground, and despatched him with his own weapon. The prince's wound was not deep, but the dagger had been smeared with poison. Fortunately there was at Acre an English surgeon with skill and nerve enough to pare away the sides of the wound, and the grand master of the Templars sent some precious drugs to stop the progress of the venom. The affectionate attentions of his loving wife, Eleanor, may have contributed very effectually to his cure, but there is no good ground for believing that she sucked the poison from her husband's wound.[1]

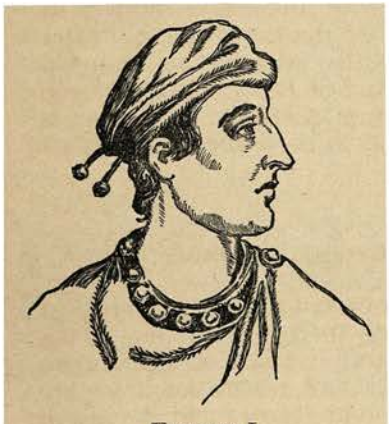
THE RETURN TO ENGLAND

Henry had already implored his son to return to England, and now Edward gladly listened to proposals of peace made by the sultan. A truce was therefore concluded for ten years, and Edward sailed again for Sicily. Teobaldo, arch-

[1] The story of Eleanor's sucking the wound is not mentioned by any chronicler living near the time. It seems to be of Spanish origin, and to have been first mentioned a century or two after the time.

deacon of Liège, who had accompanied the prince to Palestine, had been recalled some months before from Acre to fill the vacant chair of St. Peter. At Trapani, Edward received an earnest invitation from this old companion and steadfast friend, now Gregory X, to visit him at Rome.

The prince crossed from Sicily to travel by land through the Italian peninsula. At a mountain village in Calabria he met messengers, by whom he was informed, for the first time, of the death of his father. By the month of February, 1273, he was at Rome; but his friend, the pope, being absent, he stayed only two days in the Eternal City, and then turned aside to Cività Vecchia, where the pope received him with honour and affection. Edward demanded justice on the assassins of Henry d'Almaine; but Simon de Montfort, one of them, had gone to account for his crimes before a higher tribunal; and as Guy de Montfort had absconded, the king of England was obliged to be satisfied with a very imperfect vengeance. Leaving the pontiff, he continued his journey through Italy, and was received in triumph at every town. On crossing the Alps, Edward was met by a deputation from England. He travelled on to Paris, where he was courteously received by his cousin, Philip the Bold, and did homage to that king for the lands which he held in France.[d] From Paris it was expected that he would hasten to England; but he was called back to Guienne by the distracted state of that province, and detained there till the conclusion of the general council, which had been summoned to meet at Lyons. It was during this interval that he was challenged to a tournament by the count de Châlons; who, it was afterwards said, under the pretence of doing him honour, concealed a most atrocious design against his life. The pontiff by letters earnestly exhorted the king to refuse, observing to him that no monarch had ever condescended to tilt at a tournament; that such feats of arms had been forbidden by the church, on account of the murders with which they were frequently disgraced; and that it was folly in him thus to expose himself to the sword of the assassin, who, he had reason to suspect, at that very time thirsted for his blood.[1] But Edward's honour was at stake; on the appointed day he entered the lists, attended by a thousand champions partly on foot, partly on horseback, and was met by his antagonist with a retinue nearly double in number.



EDWARD I
(1239–1307)

It might be that the English were exasperated by their suspicions, or that their opponents really entertained projects of bloodshed—but the trial of skill and strength was soon converted into a most deadly battle; Edward's archers drove their opponents out of the field, mixed among the knights, and sometimes cutting the girths of their saddles, sometimes ripping up the bowels of their horses, brought the riders to the ground and secured them as prisoners. The count de Châlons, a most athletic man, after tilting with his spear, threw his arms round the king's neck to pull him from his seat. Edward's charger sprang forward at the same moment, and the count fell to the ground. He

[1] These assertions of Gregory seem to countenance the suspicion of some writers that the attempt to assassinate Edward at Acre was in reality planned by the partisans of the house of Montfort.

was replaced by his attendants; but his fall had rendered him incapable of exertion, and he demanded quarter. The king's passion induced him for a time to belabour a suppliant enemy; at length, disdaining to receive his sword, he compelled him to surrender to one of the foot champions. The English gained the prize after a most dangerous and sanguinary contest.

Edward now (1274) turned his thoughts towards England, and sent orders to prepare for his coronation. If these orders were obeyed, the coronation feast must have been a sublime specimen of a well-loaded table: for 380 head of cattle, 430 sheep, 450 pigs, 18 wild boars, 278 flitches of bacon, and 19,660 capons and fowls were ordered by the king for this solemn occasion. As he travelled through France, Edward stopped at the pleasant town of Montreuil, to settle some differences which had long existed between the English and Flemings, and which had seriously committed the commercial interests of both countries. On the 2d of August, 1274, after an absence of more than four years, he landed at Dover, and on the 19th of the same month, "after the feast of the Assumption," he was crowned, together with his high-minded wife, in Westminster abbey. The nation was proud of the valour and fame of their king, who was now in the prime of mature manhood, being in his thirty-sixth year; and the king had good reason to be proud of the affection, loyalty, and prosperity of the nation.

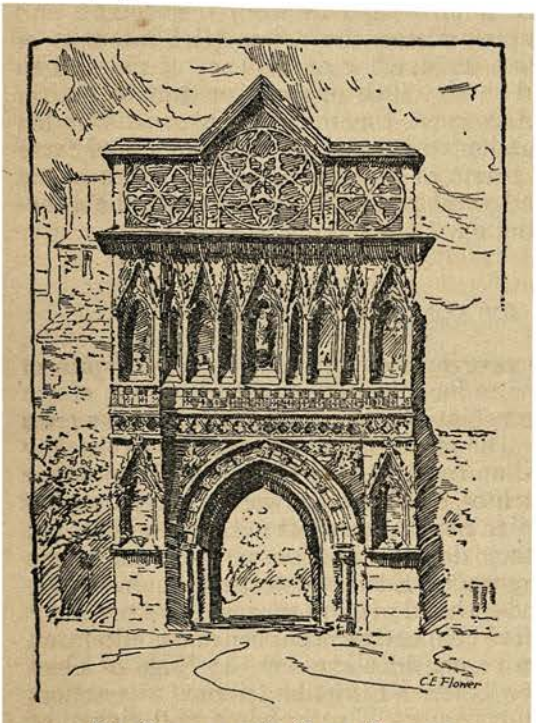
EDWARD AND THE JEWS: HIS CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

The government, however, was poor and embarrassed; and, in spite of all pretexts, this circumstance seems to have been the real whetstone of the animosity which Edward showed immediately after his accession to one class of his subjects—the unhappy Jews. The rest of the nation were now tolerably well protected from arbitrary spoliation by the Great Charter and the power of parliament; but the miserable Israelites, considered unworthy of a participation in the laws and rights of a Christian people, were left naked to oppression, no hand or tongue being raised in their defence, and the mass of the people rejoicing in their ruin. As a zealous crusader, Edward detested all unbelievers, and his religious antipathies went hand-in-hand with his rapacity, and probably justified its excesses in his own eyes. The coin had been clipped and adulterated for many years, and the king chose to consider the Jews the sole or chief authors of this crime. To bring a Jew before a Christian tribunal was almost the same thing as to sign his death-warrant. Two hundred and eighty of both sexes were hanged in London alone, and many victims also suffered in every other town where they resided.

As it was so common, clipped money might be found upon every person in the kingdom; but once discovered in the possession of an Israelite, it was taken as an irrefragable proof of guilt. The houses and the whole property of every Jew that suffered went to the crown, which thus had an interest in multiplying the number of convictions. Even before these judicial proceedings, the king prohibited the Jews from taking interest for money lent, from building synagogues, and buying lands or any free tenements. He put a capitation or poll tax upon them; he set a distinctive and odious badge upon their dress, that they might be known from all others—a Turkish custom, which in its time has been the cause of infinite suffering. Thirteen years later, when Edward was engaged in expensive foreign wars, and the parliament, in ill humour thereat, stinted his supplies, he ordered the seizure of every Jew in England; and on an appointed day, men, women, and children—

every living creature in whose veins the ancient blood of the tribes was known or supposed to flow—were brutally arrested and cast into loathsome dungeons. There seems to have been no parity of justice on this occasion, and the Jews purchased their release by a direct payment of the sum of £12,000 to the king. Edward might have continued to make good use of them from time to time in this manner, as most of his predecessors had done; but his fanaticism overcame his avidity for money, or, probably, he wanted a large sum at once, for he was then in the midst of his scheme for the subjugation of Scotland, and had just married two of his daughters.

It was in the year 1290, soon after the sitting of a parliament at Westminster, that his proclamation went forth commanding all the Jews, under the penalty of death, to quit the kingdom forever, within the space of two months. Their total number was considerable, for, though long robbed and persecuted in England, they had, notwithstanding, increased and multiplied, and their condition in the other countries of Christendom being still worse than here, the stream of emigration had set pretty constantly from the opposite side of the Channel. Sixteen thousand five hundred and eleven individuals received the king's pass, with the gracious permission to carry with them as much of their ready money as would pay the immediate expenses of their voyage. Houses, lands, merchandise, treasures, debts owing to them, with their bonds, their tallies and obligations, were all seized by the king. The mariners of London, and the inhabitants of the Cinque Ports generally, who were as bigoted as the king, and thought it no sin to be as rapacious towards the accursed Jews, robbed many of them of the small pittance left them, and drowned not a few during their passage. Some few mariners were convicted and suffered capital punishment; for the king, to use the keen sarcasm of Hume, was determined to be the sole plunderer in his dominions.



ST. ÆTHELBERHT'S GATE, NORWICH
(About 1275. Entrance to Cathedral close)

Contemporaneously with these shameful proceedings against the Jews, Edward enacted many just and wise laws for his Christian subjects.[1] The nature of his reforms shows the extent of the evil that had existed. In 1299 all the judges of the land were indicted for bribery, and only two of the number were

[1] At the parliament which met in May, 1275, under the presidence of the lord-chancellor Burnel, who had early distinguished himself not only in the civil and canon law, but in the common law of England, was passed the Statute of Westminster the First, deserving, says Lord Campbell, the name of a code rather than an act of parliament. "From this chiefly Edward I has obtained the name of the 'English Justinian,' absurdly enough, as the Roman emperor merely caused a compilation to be made of existing laws; whereas the object now

[1277 A.D.]

acquitted; the chief justice of the court of king's bench was convicted of instigating his servants to commit murder, and of protecting them against the law after the offence; the chief baron of the exchequer was imprisoned and heavily fined, and so was Sir Ralph de Hengham, the grand justiciar. But perhaps, in some of these cases, we shall not greatly err if we deduct from the delinquency of the accused, and allow something for the arbitrary will of the accuser. It is known that the king was in great want of money, when, as the consequence of their condemnation, he exacted about 80,000 marks from the judges. In recovering, or attempting to recover, such parts of the royal domain as had been encroached upon, and in examining the titles by which some of the great barons held their estates, he roused a spirit which might have proved fatal to him had he not prudently stopped in time.

When his commissioners asked Earl Warenne to show his titles, the earl drew his sword, and said: "By this instrument do I hold my lands, and by the same I intend to defend them! Our ancestors, coming into this realm with William the Bastard, acquired their possessions by their good swords." Such title-deeds were not to be disputed; but there were other cases where men wore less powerful swords, and where written deeds and grants from the crown had been lost or destroyed during the convulsions of the country; and Edward seized some manors and estates, and made their owners redeem them by large sums of money. There was much bad faith in these proceedings, but, as the king chose his victims with much prudence, no insurrection was excited.

THE CONQUEST OF WALES (1277 A.D.)

We must now retrace our steps, to take a regular view of this king's great operations in war. Edward was, to the full, as ambitious and fond of conquest as any prince of the Norman or Plantagenet line; but, instead of expending his power in foreign wars, he husbanded it for the grand plan of reducing the whole of the island of Great Britain under his immediate and undivided sway. He employed the claim of feudal superiority with final success against Wales; and though, with regard to Scotland, it eventually failed, the ruin of his scheme there did not happen until after his death, and he felt, for a time, the proud certainty of having defeated every opponent. If the acknowledgment of the paramount authority of the English kings, extracted from unsuccessful princes, justified a forcible seizure of territory against the wishes of the people, Edward may be acknowledged to have had that right over Wales. We have repeated instances of a seeming submission, when the Welsh princes purchased peace by engaging to pay certain tributes, and to recognise the suzerainty of the English throne.

The nature of Edward's right is scarcely deserving of a further examination: had no such claims existed he would have invented others; for he was determined on the conquest of the country, and internal dissensions and other circumstances favoured the enterprise. The expediency of the measure, and the advantages that have resulted from it, ought not to make us indifferent to the fate of a brave people who were fighting for their independence. Since the beginning of the reign of Henry II civilisation had advanced in England,

was to correct abuses, to supply defects, and to remodel the administration. Edward deserves infinite praise for the sanction he gave to the undertaking; and, from the observations he had made in France, Sicily, and the East, he may, like Napoleon, have been personally useful in the consultations for the formation of the new code; but the execution must have been left to others, and the chief merit of it may safely be ascribed to Lord-Chancellor Burnel, who brought it forward in parliament."

and had, from the circumstances in which the country was placed, retrograded in Wales; but there are Welsh writers of the time who trace in that land the most interesting picture of a hospitable and generous race of men, full of the elements of poetry, and passionately fond of their wild native music. Though chiefly a pastoral people, they were not rude or clownish. "All the Welsh," says Giraldus Cambrensis,[f] "without any exception, from the highest to the lowest, are ready and free in speech, and have great confidence in replying, even to princes and magnates." The mass of the nation, however, notwithstanding this partial refinement, was poor and but rudely clad, as compared with their English contemporaries. Seldom has even a race of mountaineers made a longer or more gallant stand for liberty.

At the time of Edward's aggression the principality of North Wales was still almost untouched by English arms; but the conquerors had established themselves in Monmouthshire, and held a somewhat uncertain and frequently disturbed possession of a good part of South Wales. This occupation had been effected very gradually by the great barons, who had made incursions at their own expense and with their own retainers. These lords were rewarded with the lands they gained from the Welsh. As they advanced they raised chains of fortifications, building their castles sufficiently near to communicate with and support each other. In addition to these strong fortresses, many smaller castles were constructed for the purpose of keeping the natives in awe. The more advanced posts were often retaken; and the day when one of these castles was destroyed was held by the Welsh—who foresaw the consequences of this gradual advance—as a day of universal joy, on which the father, who had just lost his only son, ought to forget his misfortune.

But still the chains were drawn more and more closely around them by the persevering invaders; and, since the conquest of Ireland, extraordinary pains had been taken to secure the whole of the line through South Wales to Milford Haven, the usual place of embarkation for the sister island. In the wilderness of the Teifi, and in many of the more inaccessible moors, marshes, and mountains, the English were still defied. But the jealousies of the petty princes and the rancorous feuds of the clans defeated all their greater projects; and, at the critical moment which was to seal the fate of the whole country, Rhys ap Meredith, the prince of South Wales, was induced to join Edward and fight against Llewelyn, the ruler of the northern principality and the representative of a rival family. Llewelyn, moreover, was opposed by his own brother, David, who also rallied, with his vassals, round the standard of the English king.[d]

With the reign of Edward the preparations for an attack on Llewelyn began. The king's claims as liege lord stood him in good stead. This feudal superiority often appeared no more than an alliance equally eligible for both parties. It might, at other times, be represented as only a mere solemnity. Yet, when once recognised, it was capable of being so stretched, in favourable circumstances, as to become a pretext for the vexation of perpetual interference. The lord paramount might excite the discontents of the subordinate tenants against their immediate lords. Whenever the vassal of the crown proved too powerful, it was seldom difficult for the lord paramount to find a decent pretext for acquiescence till a favourable opportunity of aggression should arise. He had the great advantage of acting under those forms of law and with that tone of legitimate authority which often shelter the most cruel wrongs. The confiscation of the Plantagenet territory in France, though not so unequivocal an act of injustice as many others of the same kind, was a striking instance of the account to which this jurisdiction might be turned.

[1277-1282 A.D.]

Immediately after the recognition of Edward, a summons had been issued to Llewelyn to do homage as one of his great vassals. The duties of vassalage were indisputable, and they had been uniformly acknowledged by Llewelyn. The advantage of form and the plausibilities of legal reasoning were on the side of Edward; but much of the substantial justice of the case is kept out of view by the specious language of the state papers of his ministers. Llewelyn urged that he could not with safety repair to the court of a monarch who had violated the terms of a solemn treaty recently concluded by the mediation of the pope, and who received disaffected and rebellious Welshmen with favour and distinction. He demanded hostages by way of security, appealing to the pontiff, and even to the English primate, for the reasonableness of such a request.

In the course of the negotiations Edward gave Llewelyn a proof of very ungenerous enmity. The Welsh prince was desirous of solemnising his nuptials with Eleanor de Montfort, to whom he had been a considerable time affianced. As soon as Edward heard of the voyage of this lady from France, he despatched vessels in pursuit of her, who brought her prisoner to England, where she was detained for more than two years, in a period of peace, without any colour of justice or even pretext of law. The English parliament pronounced the doom of forfeiture against Llewelyn. Sentence of excommunication was issued against him.

The first campaign against Wales either languished or was divided between petty attacks and extensive preparations. But soon Edward summoned all his vassals to take the field. He opened roads into the inmost fastnesses of Snowdon. He repaired or rebuilt the castles of Rhuddlan and Flint, manifesting at every step the wariness of a statesman and a commander preparing for the subjugation of a gallant people. Surrounded by such formidable enemies, and touched by the hope of delivering his beloved Eleanor, the prince of North Wales acquiesced in the conditions of peace imposed by the conqueror. The whole principality was, in effect, ceded, except Anglesea, the ancient refuge of their princes and their bards, which was also, however, to revert to the liege lord in case of failure of male issue of Llewelyn. Even this remnant of dominion was ransomed by a stipulation to pay the enormous sum of £50,000—a sum which, if it was afterwards remitted, was probably not exacted only because it could not be paid. The natural consequences of all treaties of submission soon manifested themselves. Llewelyn reproached himself for the sacrifice of his country, reading no less reproof in the countenance of every faithful subject.

Meanwhile, David, his brother, was indignant at a treaty more injurious to himself and his family than to a childless prince, and recoiled probably from the too complete success of his own treason. The prophecies of ancient poets easily assumed the meaning most suitable to the excited feelings of a brave and superstitious nation. Llewelyn's grievances, if founded in fact, certainly absolved him from the observance of the slavish compact. "The brave people of Snowdon declared that, though the prince should give the king possession of it, they would never submit to strangers." "The prince," said the Welsh chiefs, "cannot in honesty resign his paternal inheritance, and accept other lands among the English, of whose customs and language he is ignorant." Edward's army penetrated into Anglesea by a bridge of boats over the Menai Strait, now crossed by one of the greatest works of useful and magnificent art. But David, at the head of his generous mountaineers, carried on a vigorous warfare against them; and Llewelyn himself defeated the English invaders, killing or drowning the greater part of them in their retreat

to the mainland. In another action the lords Audley and Clifford were slain, and the king was reduced to the necessity of seeking safety in one of his own castles. In the mean time, Llewelyn, pressed by Roger Mortimer, one of the king's lieutenants, went with a few attendants to a place near Builth, where he appears to have appointed the chiefs of the neighbourhood to meet him.

Either lukewarm and fearful, or, as the Welsh annalist intimates, deliberately perfidious, the degenerate princes deserted their gallant leader. Mortimer with a large force fell on him. Thus taken by surprise, and perhaps betrayed, Llewelyn fell, the victim seemingly rather of assassination than of war. One Adam Frankton ran him through the body unawares. As soon as his rank was discovered, his head was cut off and sent to Edward, then at Shrewsbury; by whose command it was placed on the Tower of London, encircled with a crown of willows, in base mockery of those ancient songs which were fondly believed by the Welsh to prefigure their deliverer, as adorned by this symbol of sovereignty. Thus perished the last sovereign of one of the most ancient ruling families of Europe.

The year following, Prince David was also made prisoner, tried before an English parliament at Shrewsbury, convicted by them of high treason for the defence of his country, and, after being drawn asunder by horses, was beheaded and cut into four parts; the head was exposed beside that of his brother, and the members were distributed over four of the chief towns in the kingdom—probably the earliest instance of that horrible punishment afterwards appointed for treason, of which it required all the power of reason, eloquence, and character, united in the person of Sir Samuel Romilly, five hundred years afterwards, to procure the abolition.

WALES AFTER THE DEATH OF LLEWELYN

The mind is often perplexed in estimating the comparative merits of both parties in such contests as that between Edward and Llewelyn; but the only principle by which a just judgment can be formed is that of invariable regard to the respective intentions of the contending parties. Edward's object was aggrandisement; whatever occasional breaches of treaty or violations of humanity the Welsh may have committed, their deliberate aim never could have reached beyond the defence of their country. The conqueror's ambition tainted all his acts, and renders his conformity to the letter of the law a fraudulent evasion of the rules of justice: their cause was in itself sacred, and entitles them to some excuse for having maintained it by those means which the barbarity of that age deemed lawful.

The massacre of the bards is an act of cruelty imputed to Edward without evidence, and inconsistent with a temper which fitted him for what stern policy required, but was not a wantonly cruel one. It is, however, one of those traditions of which the long prevalence attests the deep-rooted hatred of the conquered towards their conquerors. On the death of Llewelyn, one of the most ancient branches of the Celtic race lost its national character.[1]

Edward had far more patience and prudence than was common to the conquerors of his time; and he devised wise means for retaining peaceful possession of what he had gained by force. He did not move from Wales until more than a year after the death of Llewelyn, and he spent the greater part of that time in dividing the country into shires and hundreds, after the manner of England, and restoring order and tranquillity. Immediately after the

[1283–1289 A.D.]

affair of Builth, he published a proclamation, offering peace to all the inhabitants, giving them, at the same time, assurances that they should continue to enjoy all their lands, liberties, and properties as they had done before. Some of the ancient usages of the country were respected, but, generally speaking, the laws of England were introduced and enforced. He gave charters with great privileges to various trading companies in Rhuddlan, Carnarvon, Aberystwith, and other towns, with the view of encouraging trade and tempting the Welsh from their mountains, and their wild, free way of living, to a more social and submissive state.

When his wife Eleanor bore him a son in the castle of Carnarvon, he adroitly availed himself of that circumstance, by presenting the infant Edward to the people as their countryman, and telling them that he, who was born among them, should be their prince. The Welsh chiefs expected that this "prince of Wales" would have the separate government of their country; for Alfonso, an elder brother of the infant Edward, was then alive, and the acknowledged heir to the English crown. For some time they indulged in this dream of a restored independence, and professed, and probably felt, a great attachment to the young Edward: but Prince Alfonso died; the illusion was also dissipated by other circumstances, and, in the sequel, the Welsh-born prince came to be regarded by his countrymen with very different feelings from either pride or affection.

After the subjugation of Wales, Edward's ambition rested for about four years—three of which he passed almost wholly on the Continent, where he was honourably engaged as umpire to settle a fresh dispute which had arisen between the kings of France, Aragon, and the house of Anjou, respecting the island of Sicily. His ability and conduct in this matter gained him a great increase of reputation among foreign princes; but the affairs of his own kingdom fell into disorder: the English people complained that he neglected their interests to take charge of what did not concern them; and the parliament at last refused him a supply which he had asked. The king then returned in haste, and, almost immediately after, he involved himself in the affairs of Scotland, which, with a few short intervals, entirely occupied him all the rest of his reign.

ALEXANDER III OF SCOTLAND

Alexander III, king of Scotland, was present with his queen, and many of his nobility, at the coronation of Edward I, in 1274, and on that occasion did homage, according to custom, for his English possessions. In 1278 he performed this ceremony a second time, declaring, according to the record preserved in the Close Rolls, that he became the liege man of his lord, King Edward of England, against all people. This was substantially the same acknowledgment that Alexander II had made to Henry III in 1244. It was no admission of Edward's claim of feudal superiority over Scotland—as is conclusively proved, if there could be any doubt on the subject, by the sequel of the record, which expressly states that Edward "received it, saving his right and claim to homage for the kingdom of Scotland, when it shall please him to bring it forward."

The government of Alexander, after he took the management of affairs into his own hands, made him universally beloved by his people; and peace and plenty blessed the land in his time. But clouds and storms were soon to succeed this sunshine.

Alexander had lost his queen, Margaret of England, in 1275; but, besides a daughter Margaret, she had left him a son, named Alexander, born at Jedburgh on the 21st of January, 1264; David, a younger son, had died in his boyhood. In 1281 the princess Margaret was married to Eric, king of Norway, and the following year the prince of Scotland, now a youth of eighteen, was united to Margaret, daughter of Guy, count of Flanders. At this time the king himself, as yet only in his forty-first year, might reasonably have counted on a much longer reign; the alliances which he had formed for his children promised to enable him to transmit his sceptre to a line of descendants; and the people seemed entitled to look forward to the continuance of the present peace and prosperity of the country for many years.

By a singular succession of calamities all these fair hopes were, one after the other, rapidly extinguished. First, in the latter part of the year 1283 died the queen of Norway, leaving only an infant daughter. The death of

CASTLE OF ST. ANDREWS
(Erected about the beginning of the thirteenth century by Bishop Roger)

Queen Margaret was followed by that of her brother, the prince of Scotland, on the 28th of January, 1284. No time was lost by Alexander in taking the measures for the settlement of the succession which these events rendered necessary. On the 5th of February the parliament was assembled at Scone, when the estates of the kingdom solemnly bound themselves, failing Alexander and any children he might yet have, to acknowledge for their sovereign the Norwegian princess—"the Maiden [or Maid] of Norway," as she is called by the old writers. The following year (April 15, 1285), Alexander married Joleta, daughter of the count de Dreux. But within a year after his marriage, on the 16th of March, 1286, as Alexander was riding, on a dark night, between Kinghorn and Burntisland, his horse stumbled with him over a high cliff, and he was killed on the spot.

The loss of this excellent king would, in any circumstances, have been a heavy calamity to his country, but the blow could not have been received at a more unfortunate moment than the present. A long minority was now the least evil the kingdom had to dread. The life of an infant, in a foreign country, alone stood between the nation and all the sure confusion and miseries of a disputed succession. The first proceeding of the estates was to appoint a regency, at a meeting held at Scone on the 11th of April. But

scarcely, it would appear, had the throne of Queen Margaret been thus set up, when it began to be undermined by plots and secret treason.

The main strength of Margaret's cause lay in there being no other certain heir to the throne if she were set aside. Had it not been for this, it is more than probable that the settlement in her favour would have been wholly disregarded after Alexander's death. Even as matters stood there was one party which had already formed the design of displacing Queen Margaret in favour of its own chief. Robert de Brus or Bruce, lord of Annandale and Cleveland, was the son of Isabella, one of the three daughters of David, earl of Huntingdon, the brother of William the Lion. He and a number of his adherents held a meeting in September, 1286, at Turnberry castle, in Ayrshire, and there bound themselves to adhere to one another on all occasions, and against all persons, saving their allegiance to the king of England, and to him who should gain the kingdom of Scotland as the rightful heir of the late king. The intention of the parties to this bond would appear to have been to obtain the crown for Bruce, by the aid of the king of England, whom, with that view, they were prepared to acknowledge as lord paramount of Scotland.

Two of the chief members of the regency, the earl of Buchan and the earl of Fife, died towards the close of the year 1288; and from this time violent divisions arose in the government. In the end of the year 1289, Eric, king of Norway, opened a negotiation with Edward on the affairs of his infant daughter and her kingdom; and at Edward's request the Scottish regency sent three of its members to take part in a solemn deliberation held at Salisbury. It was here agreed that the young queen should be immediately conveyed either to her own dominions or to England, Edward engaging in the latter case to deliver her, on demand, to the Scottish nation, provided that good order should be previously established in Scotland, so that she might reside there with safety to her person.

No mention was made in this convention of an English match for Margaret, but it appears that Edward had already obtained a dispensation from Rome for her marriage to her cousin, his eldest son. A report to that effect was very soon after spread in Scotland; whereupon the estates immediately assembled at Bridgeham, on the Tweed, and thence addressed a letter to the English king, expressing, in warm terms, their gratification. "We on our part," they concluded, "heartily consent to the alliance, not doubting that you will agree to such reasonable conditions as we shall propose to your council." They wrote at the same time to the king of Norway, pressing him to send his daughter instantly to England.

Some months after this (on the 18th of July, 1290), a treaty was concluded at the same place, by which everything in regard to the proposed marriage was finally arranged. Many stipulations were made for securing the integrity and independence of the Scottish kingdom; and all points, both of substance and of form, relating to that matter, were regulated with elaborate scrupulosity. But the event of a few weeks rendered all the painstaking and oath-taking of no effect. The Maid of Norway, having at length set sail for Britain, fell sick on her passage, and landing on one of the Orkney Islands, died there about the end of September.

THE DISPUTED SCOTCH SUCCESSION

The fatality which seemed to have pursued the royal family of Scotland for above a century past was certainly very remarkable. Within that period, it will be found, William the Lion and his posterity had made no fewer than

ten marriages, and yet there was not now a descendant of that king in existence.

In this failure of the line of William, the heir to the crown was to be sought for among the descendants of his younger brother, David, earl of Huntingdon. David, besides a son, who died without issue, left three daughters; the eldest, Margaret, married to Alan of Galloway; the second, Isabella, married to Robert de Bruce; the third, Ada, married to Henry de Hastings. Margaret's eldest daughter, Dervorgoil, married John de Baliol, lord of Barnard castle, by whom she had a son, John de Baliol; Robert de Bruce, earl of Carrick in right of his wife, was the son of Isabella; John de Hastings was the son of Ada. Baliol, therefore, was the grandson of the eldest daughter of David, earl of Huntingdon; Bruce and Hastings were the sons of his two younger daughters. According to the rule of descent as now established, no question about who had the right of succession could be raised in such a case; the descendant of the elder daughter, however remote, would be preferred to the descendant of the younger daughter, however near; and, indeed, even in that age, this rule seems to have been all but universally recognised. Still the point was not so distinctly settled that a debate might not be raised on it.

When the death of the queen first became known, it was certain that a state of circumstances had arisen in which everything was to be feared for the national independence from the ambition of the English king. The news, therefore, spread universal consternation throughout Scotland.

According to one account, it was now that an embassy to Edward, soliciting his advice and mediation, was sent by the estates of Scotland. From what immediately followed, it does appear probable that some such application may have been made by the Scots. Upon this supposition we can most easily account for the invitation which Edward addressed to their nobility and clergy to meet him at Norham, a town on the English side of the Tweed, and the readiness with which they obeyed his summons. The conference took place on the 10th of May, 1291. Here Edward distinctly announced that he proposed to regulate the succession to the throne of Scotland as superior and lord paramount of that kingdom, and insisted upon their recognition of his title as such, before any other business should be proceeded with.

Little doubt can be entertained that many of the persons present were perfectly prepared for all this, but it took a part of the assembly by surprise; and at length one voice ventured to respond that no answer could be made to the demand that had been addressed to them while the throne was vacant. "By holy Edward!" cried the English king—"by holy Edward! whose crown I wear, I will vindicate my just rights, or perish in the attempt!" At last the meeting was adjourned to the 2d of June. Edward had already issued writs to his barons and other military tenants in the northern counties, commanding them to assemble at Norham on the 3d of the same month, with horses, arms, and all their powers.

The meeting of the 2d of June took place on a green plain called Holywell Haugh, near Upsettlington, on the north bank of the Tweed, opposite to Norham castle, and within the territory of Scotland. Among those present were no fewer than eight persons who, under various titles, laid claim to the crown. One of these was Robert de Bruce, lord of Annandale. Turning first to him, Robert Burnel, bishop of Bath and chancellor of England, demanded whether he acknowledged Edward as lord paramount of Scotland, and whether he was willing to ask and receive judgment from him in that character. Bruce, says the official record of the proceedings, definitively, expressly, publicly, and openly declared his assent. The other seven com-

[1291 A.D.]

petitors afterwards did the same. Next day, John de Baliol and another competitor, making ten in all, appeared and followed their example. "The whole form of this business," as Lord Hailes remarks, "appears to have been preconcerted."

There were probably few of the assembled nobility and clergy that were not the sworn adherents of one or other of the competitors; they were divided into the Bruce party and the Baliol party, and they were of course severally ready to follow in whatever direction their chiefs might lead them. With regard, again, to the two great claimants of the crown themselves, if either consented to submit to the arbitration of Edward, it is obvious that his rival had no alternative but to acquiesce, unless he were prepared to resign all hope and chance of success. The true explanation, however, of Baliol's absence on the first day of the meeting probably is that he sought, perhaps in concert with Edward, to throw upon his opponent the odium of taking the first step in the unpopular course of surrendering the national independence. There is reason to believe that Edward had, from the first, determined that Baliol should have the crown, and that all the anxious and protracted deliberation he affected to give to the subject was merely so much hollow formality. Of the other claimants who presented themselves, most seem to have been brought forward only to give some chance of dividing any opposition that might eventually be made to the successful candidate, or even, it may be, with the object of leaving the question of the succession to the Scottish crown still open, if any casualty should remove either of the two principal competitors before Edward's designs for the complete subjection of the country should be matured. The union of the whole island under one sceptre was evidently the grand scheme upon which he had set his heart, and which inspired and directed his whole policy. At first he hoped to accomplish his object, in so far as Scotland was concerned, by the marriage of his eldest son with the queen of that country; when the death of Margaret defeated this arrangement, he could not for the present proceed to the attainment of his end by so direct a path; but that end was still the same, and was never lost sight of for a moment.

EDWARD I OF ENGLAND
(1239–1307)

The proceedings at Norham, on the 3d of June, were terminated by a unanimous agreement that a body of 104 commissioners should be appointed to examine the cause, and report to Edward; forty being named by Baliol, the same number by Bruce, and the remainder by Edward himself, who was, moreover, empowered to add to the commission as many more persons as he chose. On the 11th of the same month the regents of Scotland made a solemn surrender of the kingdom into the hands of the English king, and the keepers of castles made a like surrender of their trusts; in both cases, however, on the condition that Edward should make full restitution in two months from the date of his award in the cause of the succession.

On the 15th, Bruce and his son, with Baliol and many of the principal Scottish barons, swore fealty to Edward. One churchman only, the bishop of Sodor, presented himself to perform the disgraceful ceremony. The peace of the king of England, as lord paramount of Scotland, was then proclaimed, and the assembly finally adjourned to the 2d of August. Edward himself, in the mean time, made a progress through Scotland, calling upon persons of all ranks, from bishops and earls to burgesses, to sign the rolls of homage as his vassals. When the commissioners met at Berwick, on the 3d of August, twelve claimants of the crown presented themselves. Soon afterwards a thirteenth was added, in the person of King Eric of Norway. All of them, however, with the exception of Baliol, Bruce, and Hastings, withdrew their pretensions before any decision was pronounced. In fact, none of them had any ground whatever on which to come in before the posterity of David, earl of Huntingdon.

The final decision of the cause did not take place till the following year. Edward summoned a parliament, to meet at Berwick on the 15th of October, 1292. Here Baliol and Bruce were fully heard in defence of their respective claims; upon which the assembly came unanimously to the conclusion that, by the laws and usages of both kingdoms, in every heritable succession, the more remote in one degree lineally descended from the eldest sister was preferable to the nearer in degree issuing from the second sister—thus declaring, by implication, against the claim of Bruce as opposed to that of Baliol. In another meeting, on the 6th of November, Edward formally pronounced his decision—that Bruce should take nothing in the competition with Baliol.

Bruce and Hastings now demanded each a third of the kingdom, on the ground that it was a divisible inheritance; but this doctrine the assembly unanimously rejected. Finally, on the 17th of the same month, in the great hall of the castle of Berwick, Edward gave judgment that John de Baliol should have seisin of the kingdom of Scotland.[1] But again, at this the termination of these proceedings, as a year and a half before at the commencement, the English king solemnly protested that the judgment he had thus given should not impair his claim to the property of Scotland. On the 19th the regents of Scotland and the governors of castles were ordered to surrender their respective trusts to the new king; and the same day the great seal that had been used by the regency was broken into four parts, and the pieces deposited in the treasury of England, "in testimony, to future ages, of England's right of superiority over Scotland." The next day Baliol swore fealty to Edward at Norham. On the 30th he was solemnly crowned at Scone. Soon after he passed into England, and on the 26th of December did homage to Edward for his kingdom at Newcastle: and thus finished the first act of this extraordinary drama.

QUARREL WITH FRANCE

Events that unexpectedly arose now called away the English king to another scene. Edward's progress at home had not been viewed without serious alarm abroad. The subjugation of Wales and Scotland, by leaving

[1 "All through the great suit," says Tout,[b] "Edward's conduct had been singularly just and moderate. No one nowadays would deny that his decision was based on sound law. If Edward showed a little too much eagerness in taking advantage of the helplessness of the Scots to entrap them into an acknowledgment of his supremacy, it should be remembered that he thought he was advancing no new claim, but one constantly upheld by his predecessors."]

[1292–1293 A.D.]

him master of the whole island of Great Britain, rendered him most formidable to all his continental neighbours, and to none so dangerous as to France, where there was a source of dissension ever open, and where the English had a footing that enabled them at all times to carry the war into the heart of the country. On former occasions, several of the French kings had given countenance and encouragement to both Scotch and Welsh; but now Philip the Fair thought that the best thing to do was to exert all his strength, and drive the English from what was left of their continental dominion. The moment seemed favourable; Edward was absorbed by his great project; and as for the justice of the undertaking, had not Philip as good a right to gather up the scattered fragments of France, and to make of them a united and powerful kingdom, as Edward had to seize and consolidate the ancient independent states of Great Britain?

The English sovereign, however, was too politic not to see and provide for these schemes: he had long watched Philip with a jealous eye, and while he wisely kept his own armies at home, he had courted alliances abroad, and laboured to raise barriers against Philip's ambition. In the south, by means of presents and flattering assurances, he had won over the powerful count of Savoy; in the north, he had a good understanding with the emperor, whom he afterwards subsidised; he had married his daughter Margaret to Henry, count of Bar, whose territories gave an easy access into France on the east; and, at a later period, he made an alliance with Guy, count of Flanders. Matters were in this state when a paltry broil gave rise to sanguinary hostilities.[d]

Some English and Norman sailors fell into a quarrel while filling their water casks near Bayonne (1292), in the course of which one of the Normans was killed. The English authorities at Bayonne refused to interfere, and the Normans in revenge set upon an English ship outward bound from Bayonne and hanged a merchant of Bayonne from the yard-arm with a dog tied to his feet. Reprisals followed; the mariners of the Cinque Ports took up the quarrel, and hanged nearly every Norman they could lay hands on. Seamen of other nations took sides; the Gascons and Hollanders allied themselves with the English, while the French and Genoese took up the quarrel of the Normans. The two nations were thus practically at war before their kings had broken the peace. A fierce sea fight, in which a fleet of two hundred Norman and French ships was defeated by a combined English and Gascon force off Saint-Mahé in Brittany in 1293, at length aroused Philip to the point of action.[a]

Philip, himself enraged, and borne forward to the accomplishment of his favourite project by the universal wrath of the nation, then declared his determined enmity. He pretended that he could punish Edward as duke of Aquitaine, in which character he was a vassal of the French crown. He therefore caused a summons to be issued by his judges ordering the "duke of Aquitaine" to appear at Paris after the feast of Christmas, and answer for his offences against his suzerain. Edward sent a bishop, and then his own brother Edmund, to negotiate. Edmund appears to have been a very believing, simple personage; for, crediting Philip's assertion that he wanted no acquisition of territory, but merely a striking show of satisfaction to his own injured honour, he consented to surrender Gascony for forty days, at the end of which it was to be faithfully restored to the English king. Upon this surrender, which in some cases gave Philip a military possession of the province, the summons against Edward was withdrawn, and the French king declared himself satisfied. When the forty days had elapsed, Edward demanded repossession, which, as a matter of course, was refused to him.

Philip pronounced a judgment of forfeiture because Edward had not presented himself as a vassal ought. De Nesle, the constable of France, was sent to seize some of Edward's cities and towns; and he succeeded in several instances, because the nobles declared against the English. Soon after the feast of Easter Philip again summoned Edward to plead as duke of Aquitaine before his peers of France, and, upon his non-attendance, he declared him contumacious and disseised of all his lands in France.

Edward now prepared to plead, but it was with the sword. Having formally renounced the homage of the French king, he got ready a powerful fleet and army; but he was detained for several weeks by contrary winds, and while he lay at Portsmouth the Welsh, who thought he was gone, broke out into a general insurrection, to which it seems probable that Philip was no stranger. Detained at home by this circumstance, Edward despatched a small force to Gascony, and gave commission to his ships to plunder the French coast, upon which a number of fierce sea battles were fought, the victory falling almost invariably to the English. Edward himself turned with his usual rapidity and vigour against the Welsh, who had taken many castles and towns, and driven the English across the marches with dreadful loss. It took him some months to suppress this bold struggle for independence: he carried on the war through all the severities of winter, suffering great hardships and encountering many personal dangers; but in the following spring (1295) the Welsh once more fell beneath the mighty weight of his arms and policy, and Madoc, their brave leader, surrendered to the conqueror.

When Edward rode a conqueror from the mountains of Wales, he thought that he should at last be allowed to proceed to France and punish what he considered the execrable perfidy of Philip; but the spirit of liberty was again awake in the mountains of Scotland, and he was once more compelled to forego his continental expedition. He, however, sent his brother Edmund with a small force to Guienne. Edmund died soon after landing; but the earl of Lincoln, who succeeded to his command, drove the French from most of the towns they had occupied. These successes, however, were not lasting: Charles de Valois, Philip's brother, recovered those places; and the count d'Artois, the king's uncle, taking the command of a numerous and excellent army, beat the English in several encounters, and finally expelled them from nearly all the country, with the exception of a few maritime towns.

THE SCOTCH REVOLT

Scarcely had Baliol been fairly seated on his vassal throne when he was made to feel all the dependence and degradation of his position. In the course of the following year he was repeatedly called upon to submit to the annoyance and intolerable indignity of appearing in the English courts to answer as a defendant in all sorts of causes. Such treatment could have had only one object, and, if it had been tamely acquiesced in, one effect—to make the menial king utterly contemptible in the eyes of his subjects. The tyranny was so unrelentingly persisted in, and carried so far, that if he had the spirit of a worm it must have roused him at last. An appeal respecting the succession to some lands in Fife was the case in which his patience gave way.[d]

He took no notice of the first summons to appear and plead his cause, and when he did finally attend he answered with unwonted boldness that he was king of Scotland and could make no reply without the advice of his

people. A decree was therefore entered against him, and he was further commanded to turn over three Scottish castles to Edward until he made satisfaction for his "contempt and disobedience." Baliol prayed for and secured a suspension of the sentence, and meanwhile the French war broke out.[a]

The opportunity was too tempting a one not to be seized by Baliol for a strenuous effort to cast off the yoke. Hitherto the nation had lain, as it were, stunned and in despair. Its old spirit now began to awaken as a new dawn of hope appeared. The first measures, however, were cautiously taken. A parliament, which met at Scone in the latter part of the year 1294, directed that all the Englishmen maintained at the court should be dismissed; and then appointed a council without whose advice the king was restricted from performing any public act.

The suspicions of Edward were excited by these proceedings. He required that Berwick, Roxburgh, and Jedburgh should be delivered to the bishop of Carlisle, to remain in his hands during the war between England and France. With this demand the Scottish government deemed it prudent to comply, although they were at the moment negotiating an alliance with the French king. This French treaty—"the groundwork," observes Lord Hailes, "of many more, equally honourable and ruinous to Scotland"—was signed at Paris on the 23d of October, 1295. By it the king of Scots, "grievously offended at the undutiful behaviour of Edward to the king of France, his liege lord," engaged to assist Philip in his wars with his whole power and at his own charges. Towards the end of March, 1296, accordingly, a Scottish army, consisting of forty thousand foot soldiers and five hundred cavalry, invaded Cumberland, and, laying waste the country as they proceeded, marched to Carlisle and attacked that place. Here, however, they were repulsed. Another inroad, which they made into Northumberland, was not more successful. Meanwhile Edward himself, at the head of a great army, was already at the borders.

The royal army marched direct upon the town of Berwick. A strong garrison, composed of the men of Fife, defended the town, besides a smaller force that held the castle. The English king commenced the attack at once by sea and land: of his ships, three were burned and the rest compelled to retire; but all resistance soon gave way before the impetuous onset of the soldiery; Edward himself was the first over the dike that defended the town. In the devastation and carnage that followed no quarter was given: the inhabitants, with the garrison, were indiscriminately butchered. The massacre was continued for two days.

Berwick was taken on the 30th of March. On the 5th of April, a bold ecclesiastic, Henry, abbot of Arbroath (Aberbrothock), a messenger from the Scottish king, delivered to Edward the solemn renunciation of Baliol's allegiance and fealty. "What a piece of madness in the foolish traitor!" exclaimed Edward, when the message had been delivered; "since he will not come to us, we will go to him." A pause of a few weeks, to make the blow the surer, did not prevent this threat from being both speedily and effectually executed. Earl Warenne was first sent forward with a chosen body of troops to recover the castle of Dunbar, which the countess of March had delivered to the Scots, while her husband, by whom it was held, served in the army of Edward. The Scottish army, in full strength, advanced to its relief, when they were engaged by Warenne and completely routed, with the loss of ten thousand men. This action was fought on the 28th of April. The castle then surrendered at discretion.

In the space of about two months all the principal strongholds of the kingdom were in Edward's hand, and the conquest of the country was complete. A message now arrived from Baliol, offering submission and imploring peace. Edward, in reply, desired him to repair to the castle of Brechin, where the bishop of Durham would announce to him the terms on which his surrender would be accepted. Soon after, Baliol laid down his kingly state in a ceremonial of the last degree of baseness and humiliation. The old accounts differ as to the exact date, and also as to the scene of this penance; but it was most probably performed on the 7th of July, and, as the tradition of the neighbourhood still reports, in the churchyard of Strathcathro, in Angus. Edward was at this time at Montrose. He proceeded northward as far as Elgin—the nobility, wherever he passed, crowding in to swear fealty and to abjure the French alliance. It was on his return from this triumphant progress that he ordered the famous stone on which the Scottish kings had been wont to be crowned to be removed from the abbey of Scone and conveyed to Westminster, in testimony, says an English contemporary chronicler, of the conquest and surrender of the kingdom.

Edward then proceeded to finish his work, by settling the government of the conquered country. Here his measures were characterised by great prudence and moderation. He ordered the forfeited estates of the clergy to be restored. He even allowed most of the subordinate civil functionaries who had held office under Baliol to retain possession of their places. He left the various jurisdictions of the country in general in the same hands as before. The chief castles in the southern part of the kingdom, however, he intrusted to English captains; and he also placed some of his English subjects in command over certain of the more important districts. Finally, he appointed John de Warenne, earl of Surrey, governor, Hugh de Cressingham treasurer, and William Ormsby justiciar, to exercise the supreme authority.

THE REVOLT OF WILLIAM WALLACE

But although Edward had put down the rebellion of the Scots, he had not subdued their spirit of resistance. Within a few months the country was again in insurrection. The last and all preceding attempts to throw off the foreign yoke under which the kingdom groaned had been made under the direction of the government; there was no longer any native government, but a great leader of the people had now stepped forth from their own ranks. This was the renowned William Wallace, the second son of a knight of ancient family, Sir Malcolm Wallace, of Elderslie, in Renfrewshire. Wallace had all the qualities of a popular hero—a strength and stature corresponding to his daring courage; and also it cannot be doubted, from the known history of his career, as well as from his traditionary fame, many intellectual endowments of a high order—decision, military genius, the talent of command, a stirring though rude eloquence, and in every way a wonderful power of reaching the hearts of men and drawing them along with him. Above all, an enthusiastic patriotism and a fierce and unextinguishable hatred of the English dominion were passions so strong in Wallace that while he lived, be the hour as dark as it might, all felt that the cause of the national independence never could be wholly lost.

Wallace is first mentioned in the month of May, 1297. At this time he was merely the captain of a small band of marauders, most of them probably outlaws like himself, who were accustomed to infest the English quarters

[1297 A.D.]

by predatory attacks. Their numbers, however, rapidly grew as reports of their successful exploits were spread abroad. Suddenly we find the robber-chief transformed into the national champion, joined by some of the chief persons in the land, and heading an armed revolt against the government. The first person of note who joined Wallace was Sir William Douglas. He had commanded in the castle of Berwick when it was taken the preceding year by Edward, and after his surrender had been liberated upon swearing fealty to the English king. Disregarding this oath, he now armed his vassals and openly went over to Wallace. The united chiefs immediately marched upon Scone, the seat of the government. Earl Warenne was at this time absent in England, and Ormsby, the justiciar, who was acting as his lieutenant, with difficulty saved his life by flight; but much booty and many prisoners fell into the hands of the insurgents, and the English government was, in fact, by this bold and brilliant exploit, for the moment overthrown.

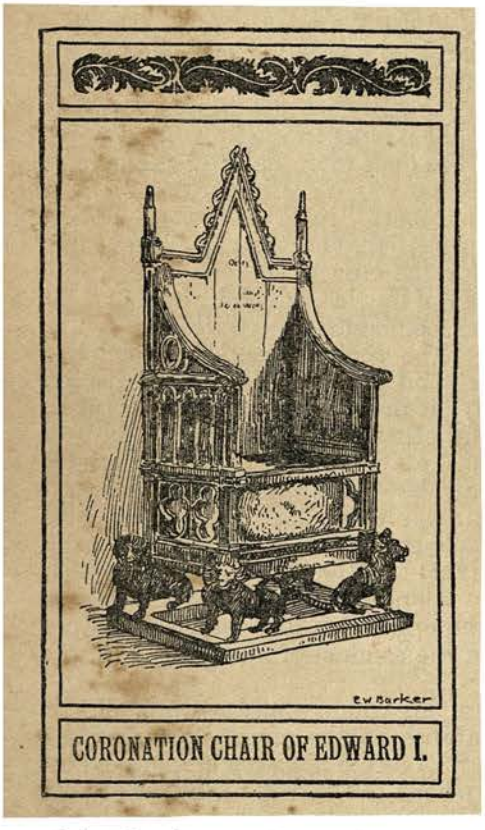
Many persons of note now crowded to the once more uplifted standard of freedom and independence. But no accession was more important or more gladly welcomed than that of the young Robert Bruce, the son of Robert de Bruce who had married the countess of Carrick, and the grandson of him who had been a competitor with Baliol for the crown. A few years before this Bruce's father had resigned the earldom of Carrick, which he held in right of his wife, to his son; and the latter now commanded a territory reaching from the Firth of Clyde to the Solway. The course taken by Baliol had hitherto naturally determined the conduct and position of the rival family. So long as Baliol had stood, even nominally, at the head of the patriotic cause, the Bruces were almost necessarily on the other side. In the last days of Baliol's reign the Scottish government issued an order confiscating the estates of all partisans of England, and of all neutrals—which was principally aimed at the house of Bruce; and a grant of their estate of Annandale was made to Comyn, earl of Buchan, who actually took possession of the family castle of Lochmaben. This he did not long retain; but the wrong was one which in that fierce age never could be forgiven. Allowance must be made for these personal resentments and rivalries, and the opposition into which men were thereby thrown, in passing judgment upon the conduct of many of the actors in this turbulent and bewildering drama.

Bruce, eventually the great liberator of his country and restorer of the Scottish monarchy, makes his first appearance on the scene soon after the fatal fight of Dunbar, in the unpatriotic part of a commissioner empowered by the conqueror to receive into favour the people of Carrick. He was at this time only in his twenty-second year. His heart, however, was probably already drawing him, through doubts and misgivings, to the cause which he was at a future day so gloriously to illustrate. Now that Baliol was removed, the time for Bruce to show himself seemed to have come. Edward, it would appear, was not without some suspicion of what his inclinations were. He therefore had summoned him to Carlisle, and made him renew, on the sword of Becket, his oaths of allegiance and fidelity. In the national enthusiasm, however, excited by the first success of Wallace, he could restrain himself no longer. "I trust," he said, "that the pope will absolve me from oaths extorted by force;" and so, breaking from his bonds, he joined the army of Wallace.

But, in that camp, jealousies and dissensions were already actively at work and disorganising everything. Edward was embarking for Flanders when he received intelligence of the new Scottish revolt. The military force of the kingdom to the north of the Trent was instantly called into array by

[1297 A.D.]

the earl of Surrey; and as soon as the men could be collected, Sir Henry Percy and Sir Robert Clifford were sent forward to meet the insurgents at the head of an army of forty thousand foot and three hundred horse. They found the Scots in nearly equal numbers, posted in a strong position in the neighbourhood of the town of Irvine, in Ayrshire. But no acknowledged leader controlled the irregular congregation of chiefs who had crowded to the standard that Wallace had raised; his authority was disowned, or but reluctantly submitted to, by many of the proud knights and barons, who never before had obeyed a plebeian general. In this miserable state of affairs, it appeared to all who had anything to lose that the wisest plan was to make their peace with the government before it should be too late. All the chief associates of Wallace, accordingly, including Bruce, and even Sir William Douglas, the first who had joined him, laid down their arms and made submission to Edward. Only one baron, Sir Andrew Moray of Bothwell, continued to adhere to Wallace, who withdrew to the north at the head of a force that was still numerous and formidable.



CORONATION CHAIR OF EDWARD I.

No further effort seems to have been made by the English government to put down the insurrection for several months. In the mean while the army of Wallace was continually receiving accessions. By the beginning of September he had driven the English from most of the strongholds to the north of the Forth, and was engaged in besieging the castle of Dundee. While there, he received information that an English army was marching upon Stirling. Leaving the siege to be continued by the citizens of Dundee, he led his whole force towards Stirling, and succeeded, by rapid marches, in reaching the banks of the Forth opposite to that town, before the English had arrived. He immediately drew up his army so as to be partly concealed behind the neighbouring high grounds.

The English army, commanded by the earl of Surrey, soon appeared on the other side of the river; it is said to have consisted of one thousand horsemen and fifty thousand foot. On its being perceived how Wallace was posted, it was resolved to offer him terms before risking an engagement; but he refused to enter into any negotiation. That night no movement was made. Early the following morning (the 11th of September) the English began to pass over by the bridge—a narrow wooden structure—along which, even with no impediment or chance of interruption of any kind to retard them, so numerous a force could not have been led in many hours. Wallace waited till about half the English were passed over; then, detaching a part of his forces to take possession of the extremity of the bridge, as soon as he perceived the

[1297-1298 A.D.]

communication by this means effectually cut off, he rushed down upon the portion of the enemy who had thus put themselves in his power, as they were still forming, and in a moment threw them into an inextricable confusion. Many thousands of the English were slain or driven into the water. No prisoners, indeed, seem to have been taken; and nearly all the English that had crossed the river must therefore have been destroyed. Surrey himself had not passed over; but after the fortune of the day became clearly irrecoverable, charging Twenge to occupy the castle of Stirling with what remains of the army he could collect, he mounted his horse and rode, without stopping, to Berwick. Even the portion of the army that had remained on the south side of the river seems to have been in great part dispersed. The loss of the Scots was trifling; the only man of note that fell was Sir Andrew Moray.

The great result of the victory was nothing less than the almost complete liberation of the country once more from the English dominion. The castles of Edinburgh, Dundee, Roxburgh, and Berwick all immediately surrendered; and in a short time there was not a fortress, from one end of Scotland to the other, in the possession of the English king. Wallace soon after even invaded England, and for some time maintained his army in Cumberland—a movement to which he was partly induced by a severe famine that now arose in Scotland, where unfavourable seasons had conspired with the waste of war to afflict the soil.

Thus was Scotland again lost by Edward, even more suddenly than it had been won. He was still detained in Flanders by the war in which he had engaged with the French king for the recovery of Guienne, while his conquest nearer home was thus wrested out of his hands. It appears that strenuous efforts were made by Philip to have the Scots included in the benefit of the treaty of peace, the truce preliminary to which was agreed upon in October of this year (1297). But Edward would hear of no terms for those whom he called revolted subjects and traitors.

The Battle of Falkirk

Edward returned to England about the middle of March, 1298, and instantly summoned the barons, and other military tenants, to reassemble at York on the feast of Pentecost. With this immense army Edward proceeded to Roxburgh. From this point he advanced, in the beginning of June, along the east coast—a fleet with supplies for the army having been sent forward to the Firth of Forth; but for several weeks no enemy, scarcely even any inhabitants, were to be seen, and the invaders could only take a useless revenge in wasting an already deserted country.

The Scots meanwhile, under the direction of Wallace, had been collecting their strength in the interior; and many of the chief nobility, including Bruce, were now assembled again around the great national leader. Edward soon became involved in very serious difficulties; his ships were detained by contrary winds; and an alarming mutiny broke out in the camp, originating in a quarrel between the English and the Welsh soldiers, the latter of whom were at one time on the point of withdrawing and joining the Scots. No news of the ships arriving, however, the scarcity of provisions soon became so distressing that a retreat to Edinburgh was resolved upon, when information was received that the Scottish army was encamped not far off in the wood of Falkirk. "Thanks be to God!" exclaimed Edward, "who hitherto hath delivered me from every danger; they shall not need to follow me; I will forthwith go and meet them."

That night the army lay in the fields, the king himself sleeping on the ground. A kick from his horse, which stood beside him in the night, broke two of his ribs; and in the first confusion occasioned by the accident a cry arose that the king was seriously wounded or killed—that there was treason in the camp. Edward immediately, disregarding the pain he suffered, mounted his horse, and, as it was now dawn, gave orders to continue the march. Soon the whole Scotch army was descried forming, on a stony field, at the side of a small eminence in the neighbourhood of Falkirk. Wallace divided the infantry of his army, which was greatly inferior in numbers to that of the English, into four circular bodies, armed with lances, which the men protruded obliquely as they knelt with their backs against each other; the archers were placed in the intermediate spaces; the horse, of which there were only one thousand, were drawn up at some distance in the rear. Edward's cavalry were ranged in the front of his battle, in three lines.

The attack was made at the same time by the first of these, led by Bigod, earl marshal, and the earls of Hereford and Lincoln; and by the second, under the lead of the bold bishop of Durham. The shock was gallantly met by the Scottish infantry, and for some time they stood their ground firmly. The cavalry, however, whether dismayed by the immense disparity between the numbers of the enemy and their own, or, as has been conjectured, from treason on the part of their commanders, fled without striking a blow; and, thus left without support against the repeated charges of the English horse, the lancers and archers also at length gave way, and the rout became complete. The battle of Falkirk was fought on the 22d of July, 1298. It is said that fifteen thousand Scots fell on this fatal day. On the English side the loss was inconsiderable. Wallace retreated with the remains of his army to Stirling, whither he was pursued by the English; but when they arrived he was gone, and the town was found reduced to ashes. The victorious invaders now carried fire and sword through the country in all directions. The whole of Fifeshire was laid waste and given up to military execution. The city of St. Andrews, which was found deserted, was set on fire and burned to the ground. Perth was burned by the inhabitants themselves on the approach of the English. Edward, however, was speedily obliged to leave the country from the impossibility of finding the means of subsisting his troops.

EDWARD'S FINANCIAL MEASURES

The expensive wars of Wales, Scotland, and Guienne had caused Edward to oppress the English people with levies and taxes; in the raising of which he had not always respected the constitutional charter, while on some occasions he had recourse to artifices similar to those which had succeeded so badly with his father, Henry III. At one time he pretended that he had again taken the cross, and thus obtained the tenth of all church benefices for six years. A few years after this he seized the moneys deposited in the churches and monasteries, and kept the greater part for his own uses, promising, however, to pay it back some time or other. His financial proceedings with the church show that times were materially altered, for the main weight of taxation was thrown upon that body. After obtaining a reluctant grant from the lords and knights of the shire of a tenth on lay property, he demanded from the clergy a half of their entire incomes. Here, for the first time, he encountered a stern opposition on the part of the bishops, abbots, and common clergy; but they were bullied into compliance.

[1294–1297 A.D.]

This was in 1294. In the following year, having obtained a very liberal grant from parliament, he exacted a fourth from the churchmen, who again were obstinate, and obliged him, in the end, to be satisfied with a tenth. Besides these burdens, the church was sorely racked by the king's purveyors and commissaries, who, particularly during the more active parts of the Scotch war, continually emptied the store-houses, granaries, farm-yards, and larders, and carried off all the vehicles, horses, and other animals, for the transport of army stores, insomuch that the poor abbots and priors complained that they had scarcely a mule left in their stables upon which to go their spiritual rounds. At last they applied to the pope for protection, and Boniface VIII granted them a bull, ordaining that the clergy should not vote away their revenues without the express permission of the holy see.

But the pope was engaged in many troubles; the bull, which applied equally to all Christian countries, was strenuously opposed in France by Philip the Fair; and in the following year, 1297, he found himself obliged to publish a second bull, which explained away and stultified the first; for it provided that whenever the safety of the kingdom required it, churchmen must pay their aids; and it left to the king and his council the right of deciding on the necessity. Before this second bull arrived, the English clergy, fancying that they were well supported by the previous document, met, and boldly refused some of Edward's demands; upon which he outlawed the whole body, both regular and secular, and seized their goods and chattels, not leaving bishop, parish priest, abbot, or monk so much as bread to eat or a bed to lie upon. As there were no Beckets in the land, these measures produced a general submission to the king's arbitrary will, even before the arrival of the explanatory bull.

It was far otherwise when the king laid his hand on the trading classes: they had borne a great deal in the way of tallages and increased export duties; but when he seized all the wool and hides that were ready for shipping, and sold them for his own profit, a universal and loud outcry was raised, notwithstanding his assurances that he would faithfully pay back the amount. The merchants assembled—the rich burghers, the landed proprietors of all classes consulted together; and their consultations were encouraged by some of the greatest of the nobles, who were not so blinded by the career of conquest and glory in which the king was leading them as to be neglectful of their more immediate interests, or indifferent to those violent inroads on the national rights.[1]

Towards the end of February, 1297, Edward felt the effect of these deliberations. He had collected two armies, one of which was to go to Guienne, the other into Flanders, when the earl of Hereford, the constable, and the earl of Norfolk, the marshal of England, both refused to quit the country. Turning to the marshal, the king exclaimed, "By the everlasting God, sir earl, you shall go or hang." "By the everlasting God, sir king, I will neither go nor hang!" and so saying, Norfolk withdrew with Hereford. Thirty bannerets and fifteen hundred knights immediately followed the marshal and the constable, and the king was left almost alone. An incautious step at

[1] Hallam doubts whether the cities and boroughs continued to sit in parliament by their representatives under Edward I. "The revolutionary character of Montfort's parliament in the 49th of Henry III would sufficiently account both for the appearance of representatives from a democracy so favourable to that bold reformer, and for the equality of power with which it was probably designed to invest them. But whether in the more peaceable times of Edward I the citizens or burgesses were recognised as essential parties to every legislative measure, may, as I have shown, be open to much doubt."—HALLAM'S *Supplementary Notes*. Note 180.

this moment might have cost him his crown or his life, but Edward was a wonderful master of his passions when necessary, and his craft and policy were fully equal to his merits as a warrior. He knew that Winchelsey, archbishop of Canterbury, and the clergy gave great weight to the present opposition, and these he detached by blandishments and promises. He knew that his brilliant exploits in war had endeared him to the unthinking multitude, and he also knew how to touch their hearts.

The measure he adopted was singularly dramatic: he stood forth before the people of London, mounted on a platform in front of Westminster hall, nobody being near him save his son Edward, the archbishop of Canterbury, and the earl of Warwick: he told the people that nobody grieved more than he did for the burdensome taxes laid upon his dear subjects, but this burden was one of absolute necessity to preserve not only his crown but their blood from the Welsh, the Scots, and the French. Then he added: "I am going to expose myself to all the dangers of war for your sakes. If I return alive, I will make you amends for the past; but if I fall, here is my dear son, place him on my throne, his gratitude will be the rewarder of your fidelity!" Here he stopped, and a few tears rolled down his iron cheek. The archbishop wept; the spectators were tenderly affected, and, after a brief pause, the air was rent with shouts of applause and loyalty. This display of enthusiasm gave the king great encouragement, and having issued writs for the protection of church property, and appointed his former opponent, the archbishop of Canterbury, chief of the council of regency under Prince Edward, he went to embark for Flanders with such troops as he had kept together.

But a few days after he was brought to a halt at Winchester, by reports of the hostile spirit of the nobles; and while in that city, a remonstrance, in the name of the archbishops, bishops, abbots, and priors, the earls, barons, and commons of England, was presented to him. After stating in broad terms that they were not bound to accompany the king to Flanders—a country where neither they nor any of their ancestors had ever done service for the kings of England—and that even if they were inclined to take a part in that expedition the poverty to which he had reduced them rendered them unable to do so, they went on to tell him that he had violated their charters and liberties; that his "evil toll" (so they called the export duty on wool) was excessive and intolerable; and that his present expedition to the Continent was ill-advised, seeing that his absence would leave the country open to the incursions of the Scots and the Welsh. The king evaded any very direct answer, and relying on the favourable disposition of the common people, he had the courage to depart in the very midst of these discontents.

EXPEDITION TO FLANDERS

He landed near Sluys in the end of August: his plans were concerted with his usual sagacity; but coalitions are faithless and uncertain things, and he had in Philip the Fair an opponent as crafty, and, at the least, as unscrupulous as himself. These great kings had long struggled for possession of a young lady—Philippa, daughter of Guy, count of Flanders. As early as 1294 Edward had concluded a treaty of marriage, which was to unite the fair Fleming to the prince of Wales; but it was Philip's interest to prevent any close union between England and Flanders, and he resolved that the marriage should not take place. After many secret intrigues, which failed—as both the young lady and her father were bent on the English

[1297 A.D.]

union—the French king invited Count Guy to meet him at Corbeil, that he might consult him on matters of great importance. The count, who was a frank, honest old man, went, and took his countess with him; he was no sooner in his power than Philip harshly reproached him with the English treaty—told him that no vassal of the French crown, however great, could marry any of his children without the king's license—and then sent him and his wife prisoners to the tower in the Louvre.

This arbitrary and treacherous measure excited great disgust, and the better feeling of the French peers, and the remonstrances of a papal legate, forced Philip to liberate the old count and his countess. Before letting go his hold, however, he made Guy swear he would think no more of his English alliance. The count contracted the obligation; but this was not enough for the French king, who had broken too many oaths himself to have much reliance on those of other men: he demanded that Philippa should be placed in his hands as a hostage; and when that young lady was brought to Paris—and not before—her parents were liberated. As soon as Count Guy reached his own dominions, he made an affecting appeal to the pope; the church entered with some zeal into the case; but notwithstanding repeated threats of excommunication, Philip the Fair persisted in keeping his innocent hostage, who was not more than twelve years of age. At last the old count formally renounced his allegiance, defied his suzerain, and entered heart and soul into a league with the English king.

It was in consequence of this treaty, which was sworn to in the most solemn manner, that Edward went to Flanders after preparing a formidable alliance. The other chief members of the coalition were the emperor, the duke of Austria—who had both been subsidised by Edward—and the duke of Brabant and count of Bar, who were his own sons-in-law, by their marriage with the princesses Margaret and Eleanor of England. When the hired allies got Edward's money, they seem to have considered their part of the business as done; and no member of the coalition was very faithful or strenuous, except the unhappy count Guy. But the whole expedition became a series of misadventures, some of which were sufficiently disgraceful to the English conqueror. He had scarcely landed at Sluys, when the mariners of the Cinque Ports, and those of Yarmouth and other ports—between whom there were many rancorous old jealousies—quarrelled, and then fought as if they had been national enemies ranged under two opposite flags. On the Yarmouth side, five-and-twenty ships were burned and destroyed in this wild conflict. The king's land forces were scarcely in a better state of discipline, owing, probably, to the absence of most of the great officers whom they had been accustomed to obey. The disorders they committed did not tend to produce unanimity in the country.

The rich and populous cities of Flanders were, in fact, as jealous of each other and split into almost as many factions as the little Italian republics of the Middle Ages. Philip the Fair had a strong party among them, and that active sovereign had greatly increased it, and weakened his enemies, by marching into the Low Countries at the head of sixty thousand men and gaining a great victory at Furnes, before Edward could arrive. The French occupied many of the towns; and Lille, Courtrai, Ypres, Bruges, and Damme were either taken, or given up to them soon after the landing of the English. Edward drove them out of Damme, and might have done the same at Bruges, had it not been that his English and the Flemings who were serving with them fell into strife, and fought about the division of the spoils of the town, which they had not yet taken. Soon after this he went into winter quarters

at Ghent, and there deadly feuds broke out between the townspeople and his troops: seven hundred of the latter were killed in a tumult, in which Edward's own life was endangered.

THE CONFIRMATION OF THE CHARTERS

Spring approached (1298), but it brought no news of the inactive members of the coalition; and as Edward's presence was much wanted at home, he eagerly listened to overtures from Philip, concluded a truce for two years, and, leaving Count Guy to shift for himself, sailed, somewhat dishonoured, for England. But his English subjects had not waited for this moment of humiliation to curb his power. As soon as he set sail for Flanders the preceding year, the constable and earl marshal, with many other nobles, in presence of the lord treasurer and of the judges, forbade the officers of the exchequer to exact payment of certain taxes which had been laid on without proper consent of parliament. The citizens of London and of the other great trading towns made common cause with the barons; and, after issuing some orders which the exchequer durst not obey, and making some fruitless attempts at deception and evasion, Edward was obliged to send over from Ghent instructions to his son and the council of regency to bend before a storm which there was no opposing; and in the month of December, from the same city of Ghent, he was fain to grant, under the great seal, another confirmation of the two charters, together with a full confirmation of the important statute called *De Tallagio non Concedendo,* declaring that henceforth no tallage or aid should be levied without assent of the peers spiritual and temporal, the knights, burgesses, and other freemen of the realm, which had been passed in a parliament held by Prince Edward in the preceding September.

For many years parliament had exercised a salutary control in such matters; but this statute, for the first time, formally invested the representatives of the nation with the sole right of raising the supplies. In full parliament, which met at York in the month of May, some six weeks after the king's return, the earl of Hereford, the constable, and the earl of Norfolk, the marshal, demanded of him that he would ratify in person, and with proper solemnities, his recent confirmation of the charters. Edward said that it could not be now, as he must hasten to chastise the Scottish rebels; but he promised to do what was asked of him on his return from the north.

It will prevent confusion to bring these transactions to one point, without regard to the strict chronological order in which they occurred. In March, 1299, Edward met his parliament again at Westminster. The bloody laurels of Falkirk were fresh on his brow: he had all the prestige of recent success; but, undaunted by his glory and might, the barons required the fulfilment of his promises. He endeavoured to gain time, and when the lords urged him, he withdrew from parliament and got out of London secretly, and as if by stealth. But these earnest men would not be evaded: they followed him; and then the proud conqueror was compelled to make excuses. At last he granted the ratification so firmly demanded; but, with singular bad faith, he took parliament by surprise, and added a clause at the end of the document (a saving of the right of the crown) which utterly destroyed the value of the concession, and went to shake the very foundations of the Great Charter itself.

Upon this the mass of the barons returned suddenly to their homes. Edward was alarmed at their hostile countenance; but, fancying he could delude the plain citizens, he ordered the sheriffs of London to call a public

meeting, and to read the new confirmation of the charters. The citizens met in St. Paul's churchyard, and listened with anxious ears: at every clause, except the last, they gave many blessings to the king; but when that last clause was read, the London burghers cursed as loud and as fast as they had blessed before. Edward took warning: he summoned the parliament to meet again shortly after Easter, and then he struck out the detested clause, and granted all that was asked of him in the forms prescribed. Hereford, the constable, died shortly after the ratification, but his principles had taken too deep a root to be much injured by the death of any one man, however great. In the course of three years the king artfully contrived to punish, on other charges, and impoverish many of the barons who had most firmly opposed him; but this measure only convinced men more than ever of the vital necessity of restricting his power.

In 1304 Edward arbitrarily sent to raise a tallage on all the cities and boroughs of his demesne; and in the following year he despatched secret envoys to the pope, to represent that the concessions he had made had been forced from him by a conspiracy of his barons, and to ask an absolution from his oaths and the engagements he had so repeatedly and solemnly contracted with his subjects. Notwithstanding Edward's instancing the case of his father, Henry III, who was absolved of his oaths to the earl of Leicester, the answer of Clement V was rather an evasive one. Thus, but slightly encouraged to perjury on the one hand, awed by the unanimity of the barons on the other, and then once more embarrassed by a rising of the patriots in Scotland, who never left him long in tranquil enjoyment of his usurpation, the mighty Edward was compelled to respect his engagements and the will of the nation. It required, indeed, an "intrepid patriotism" to contend with and finally control such a sovereign; and England never has produced any patriots to whom she owes more gratitude than to Humphrey Bohun, earl of Hereford, and Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk. Little did the Scottish patriots surmise that, while they were contending for their own national liberties, they were securing those of England also.

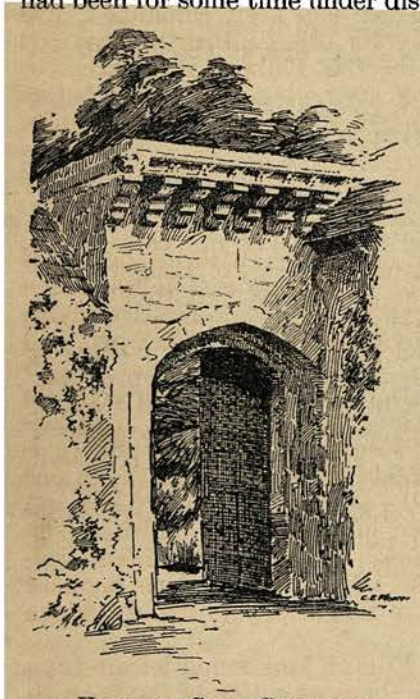
PEACE WITH FRANCE

The vision of the splendid inheritance of Eleanor of Aquitaine still haunted Edward's imagination. With such an opponent as Philip the Fair he could scarcely hope to recover all those states which the divorced wife of Louis VII conveyed to Henry II of England, but he was resolved to get back at least the country of Guienne. Having experienced the uncertainty of foreign coalitions, and having no great army of his own to spare for continental warfare, Edward determined to obtain his end by treating diplomatically with the French king, and sacrificing his faithful ally the count of Flanders.

In this he had more in view than the recovery of Guienne; for, as the price of his own treachery to Count Guy, he expected that Philip would be equally false to his treaty with the Scots, whom he had hurried into hostilities for his own purposes. Since Edward's campaign in Flanders, the arrogance and exactions of the French had almost destroyed their party in that country; and though they made a temporary conquest of it, the burghers of Ghent, Lille, Bruges, and the other free cities gave them a signal defeat in the battle of Courtrai, which was fought in the year 1302. Philip's cousin, the count d'Artois, commanded the French on this occasion; and, after his disgraceful defeat, all the Flemish towns threw off the French yoke, and elected John of

Namur to be their governor-general, for Count Guy had been once more entrapped by Philip, who kept him a close prisoner. The French king was now as anxious to recover Flanders as Edward was to keep Scotland and to get back Guienne.

It appears that the pope, who had been appealed to as mediator, first suggested, as a proper means of reconciling the two kings, that Edward, who had been for some years a widower, should marry Margaret, the sister of Philip; and that his eldest son, the prince of Wales, should be affianced to Isabella, or Isabeau, the daughter of that sovereign. This double marriage had been for some time under discussion, and had given scope to much mutual deception. Each of the kings impudently affected a delicacy of conscience about abandoning his allies; and Edward stated (what was perfectly true) that he had pledged his soul and honour to the marriage between the prince of Wales and Philippa, the daughter of the unfortunate count of Flanders—that he, King Edward, had sworn upon the gospels to make neither peace nor truce with France unless it were conjointly with his ally, the count of Flanders. Philip the Fair, on his side, spoke of his allies, the Scots, and of the solemn obligations he had contracted with them; but each gracious king must have laughed at the other, and probably at himself, too, in making this interchange of scruples of conscience.



HARNHAM GATE, SALISBURY
(Entrance to Cathedral Close)

Edward married Margaret of France in September, 1299; and at the same time his son, who was thirteen years old, was contracted to Isabella, who was about six years old. A congress, held at Montreuil, which preceded this marriage, had settled that there should be peace between the French and English crowns; that the king of England should make satisfaction for the many French ships which his mariners had taken at the beginning of the war; and that the king of France should place sundry towns in Gascony in the custody of the pope, to be by him held till the Guienne question should be adjusted. This treaty, however, had not been properly ratified; Philip the Fair quarrelled with the arbiter, and even instigated Sciarra Colonna to arrest and ill-treat Pope Boniface. Other circumstances had prevented the accommodation; but at last, on the 20th of May, 1303, the Treaty of Montreuil was ratified, a treaty of commerce was concluded between the two countries, and Edward recovered Guienne, for which the earl of Lincoln swore fealty and did homage in his name. In this treaty the Scots were not even mentioned. Philip, indeed, had bargained with Edward to abandon Scotland if he would abandon Flanders. The fate of Count Guy and of his innocent daughter was sad in the extreme. After keeping him four years in close prison, Philip the Fair liberated the count and sent him into Flanders to induce his own subjects to convert into a lasting peace a truce they then had with the French. The count went, and not succeeding in his mission he

honourably returned, as he had promised to do in that case, to Philip, who again committed him to prison. The poor old man died soon after at Compiègne. But neither the battle of Mons-en-Pévêle, nor a series of bloody engagements which followed it, could break the spirit of the free citizens of Flanders. "By St. Denis," cried Philip, "I believe it rains Flemings!"

At last he condescended to treat on moderate terms with the trading and manufacturing citizens; and about a year after the ratification of the treaty with Edward, he agreed to a truce for ten years. Robert, the eldest son of Count Guy, was then liberated, and entered on possession of Flanders; the body of the octogenarian state prisoner, which had been embalmed, was delivered up; and his younger son and many Flemish gentlemen recovered their liberty. But in this general release the fair Philippa was excepted; and she died of grief and captivity not long after, about two years before Prince Edward of Carnarvon completed his marriage with Isabella of France.

THE SCOTCH WAR RENEWED

All this while Edward had never ceased to be occupied with his design of completing the subjugation of Scotland. The four years that followed the battle of Falkirk were productive of no important results. Wallace disappears from the scene after his great defeat. In his room, the barons appointed William Lamberton, bishop of St. Andrews, John de Soulis, John Comyn the younger, and Robert Bruce, earl of Carrick, guardians of the kingdom in the name of Baliol. This was indeed a strange union of all the great factions—Bruce acting in the name of Baliol, and associated in the same commission with Comyn, the only person who stood between him and the throne if Baliol should be set aside; for Comyn was the son of Baliol's sister Marjory, and, failing King John and his issue, the heir of right to the crown. John Baliol, who had remained a prisoner in the Tower of London since his abdication in 1296, was liberated by Edward on the intercession of Pope Boniface in 1299, and conveyed to his ancestral estate of Bailleul, in Normandy, where he lived in quiet till his death in 1314.

It was not till November, 1299, that the English king found leisure from his other affairs to set about preparations for the prosecution of the Scottish war, and the effort he then made ended in nothing; for after an army had been assembled at Berwick, in November, his barons, alleging his continued evasion of the charters, peremptorily refused to advance, and he was obliged to return home. The consequence was the capitulation of the castle of Stirling to a Scottish force that had been for some time besieging it. In the summer of 1300 Edward made an incursion into Annandale and Galloway; but it was attended with no result except the devastation of the former of these districts, and the formal and useless submission of the latter. On the 30th of October a truce with the Scots was concluded at Dumfries, to last till Whitsunday in the following year. Pope Boniface VIII now claimed Scotland as belonging of right to the Roman see, and forbade Edward to continue the war; but the English parliament as well as the English king denied the right.

The truce having expired, Edward, in the summer of 1301, again marched into Scotland. This campaign, however, was still more unproductive than the last; the Scots, as the English king advanced, laid the country waste before him, till at last, an early and severe winter coming on, he was compelled to retire. In January, 1302, by the mediation of France, he was induced to conclude another truce with the Scots, to endure till the 30th of November.

As soon as the truce had expired he prepared to renew the war. This time, however, instead of proceeding to Scotland in person, he sent thither John de Segrave, at the head of an army of twenty thousand men, mostly cavalry. The issue of this expedition was disastrous. Segrave, advancing towards Edinburgh, was suddenly attacked early in the morning of the 24th of February, 1303, in the neighbourhood of Roslin, by the Scottish forces under the command of Comyn, the guardian, and Sir Simon Fraser, and sustained a total defeat.

The termination of the dispute with France now left Edward free to turn with his whole power to the Scottish war. The Treaty of Montreuil was ratified at Paris, as above related, on the 20th of May; on the 21st of that month the English king was with his army at Roxburgh, and on the 4th of June he had reached Edinburgh, his progress having been marked at every step by fields laid waste and towns and villages set on fire. From Edinburgh he appears to have pursued his unresisted and destructive course to Perth, and thence to Aberdeen and Kinloss in Elgin (Moray). At the strong and extensive fortress of Lochendorb, built on an islet in the midst of a lake, he established his quarters for some time, while he received the homage and oaths of fealty of the northern barons. From this remote point he returned southwards in the latter part of October. Of all the places of strength to which he came, the castle of Brechin alone shut its gates against him. The garrison, however, capitulated the day after their brave commander, Sir Thomas Maule, had been slain.

Edward took up his winter quarters in Dunfermline in the beginning of December. The last remnant of the Scottish forces that kept the field now assembled in the neighbourhood of Stirling, the only place in the country that still held out. But Edward and his cavalry at once dispersed this little army. Shortly after (February, 1304) Comyn and some other noblemen made their submission to the commissioners of the English king at Strathorde, in Fifeshire. It was agreed that they should retain their lives, liberties, and lands, subject only to such fines as Edward might impose. The capitulation was to include all other persons who might choose to take advantage of it, with a few exceptions, of whom the last was the illustrious Wallace, to whom it was significantly accorded that, if he chose, he might render himself up to the will and mercy of Edward. Not long after, a parliament was assembled at St. Andrews, in which sentence of outlawry was pronounced against Wallace, Fraser, and the garrison of Stirling. All the persons excepted eventually surrendered themselves on the terms offered to them; even Fraser at length gave himself up: Wallace alone stood out.

Scotland, however, was not yet completely subdued so long as its chief place of strength, the castle of Stirling, remained unreduced. To the siege of this fortress, therefore, Edward now addressed himself. The operations commenced on the 22d of April (1304). Thirteen warlike engines were brought to be used against the walls; and the ample leaden roof of the cathedral of St. Andrews was torn off to assist in the construction of these formidable machines. Some of them threw stones of two and three hundred weight. Edward himself directed everything that was done, and was several times struck by stones and javelins thrown from the castle. After the siege had continued nearly a month, without much progress having been made, the sheriffs of York, Lincoln, and London were commanded to purchase all the bows, quarrels, and other warlike weapons that could be procured within their districts, and to send them to Stirling; and the governor of the Tower was also desired to send down immediately a supply from London.

[1304–1305 A.D.]

All the efforts of the assailants were repelled for two months longer by Sir William Oliphant and his handful of gallant associates, who did not number more than 140 soldiers. They held out till their provisions were exhausted and the castle was reduced almost to a heap of ruins. Then, on the 20th of July, they surrendered at discretion. The governor and twenty-four of his companions of rank, all except two of them who were ecclesiastics, stripped to their shirts and undergarments, were led forth from the castle, and presenting themselves before Edward on their bent knees, with their hair dishevelled and their hands joined in supplication, acknowledged their guilt with trembling and the semblance of shedding tears, and gave themselves up to his mercy. Their lives were spared, and they were sent to the Tower of London and other English prisons.

A few months after the fall of Stirling the last enemy that Edward had to dread seemed to be cut off by the capture of Wallace. It appears that Edward had anxiously sought to discover his retreat, and that, tempted by the prospect of the rewards his baseness might earn for him, Ralph de Haliburton, one of the prisoners lately taken at Stirling, had proffered his services for that purpose. It is not clear, however, that it was by Haliburton's exertions that Wallace was actually taken; all that is certainly known is that, upon being seized, he was conveyed to the castle of Dumbarton, then held under a commission from the English king by Sir John Menteith. He was brought to London, "with great numbers of men and women," says Stow,[h] "wondering upon him. He was lodged in the house of William Delect, a citizen of London, in Fenchurch street. On the morrow, being the eve of St. Bartholomew, he was brought on horseback to Westminster, and in the great hall at Westminster, he being placed on the south bench, crowned with laurel—for that he had said in times past that he ought to bear a crown in that hall, as it was commonly reported—and being appeached for a traitor by Sir Peter Mallorie, the king's justice, he answered that he was never traitor to the king of England; but for other things whereof he was accused, he confessed them."

Wallace was put to death as a traitor, on the 23d of August, 1305, at the usual place of execution—the Elms, in West Smithfield. He was dragged thither at the tails of horses, and there hanged on a high gallows, after which, while he yet breathed, his bowels were taken out and burned before his face. The head was afterwards placed on a pole on London Bridge; the right arm was sent to be set up at Newcastle, the left arm to Berwick, the right foot and limb to Perth, and the left to Aberdeen.

A few weeks after the execution of Wallace, ten commissioners, elected by a council of the Scottish nation, which Edward had summoned to meet at Perth, assembled in London, and there, in concert with twenty commissioners from the English parliament, proceeded to settle a plan of government for the conquered country. The whole arrangement, however, was overthrown ere it had been well established. Within six months from the death of Wallace the Scots were again up in arms, around a new champion.

Robert Bruce's Revolt

This was Robert Bruce. Bruce had again made his peace with England some time before the capitulation of Comyn and his friends at Strathorde, which he was enabled the more easily to effect inasmuch as he had not been present at the battle of Falkirk, having previously shut himself up in the castle

of Ayr and refused to join the Scottish army. Edward had since sought to secure his adherence by treating him with favour and confidence. When his father, who had all along continued attached to the English interests, died, in the latter part of the year 1304, young Bruce was permitted to take possession of the whole of his estates both in England and Scotland. At the settlement of the latter kingdom, in the following year, while his great rival, Comyn, was heavily fined, Bruce was intrusted with the charge of the important fortress of Kildrummy, in Aberdeenshire, by commission from the English king.

It is never to be forgotten that, up to this time, whatever his aversion to the English domination may have been, there had been repelling circumstances of the strongest nature to prevent Bruce from taking part entirely with the patriotic party, who, although they were contending against England, acted in the name and chiefly under the conduct of the enemies of his house and person—of the family which he looked upon as having come between him and his splendid birthright. Wallace might fight for Baliol; Bruce scarcely could. And as little, after Baliol might be considered to be set aside, should he ally himself with Comyn, the near connection of Baliol and the inheritor of his pretensions. Bruce, indeed, if he still retained a hope of seating himself on the disputed throne, must now have looked upon Comyn as the man of all others of whom it was most necessary for him to clear his path; and the same also no doubt were the feelings of Comyn in regard to Bruce. It is probable that the favour of Edward was courted by each with the object of depressing or destroying his rival.

The circumstances, however, that led to the explosion of the inflammable elements which only required to be brought together to produce such a catastrophe, are involved in much uncertainty. It appears that in June, 1305, after his last submission to Edward, Bruce had entered into a secret league with William Lamberton, bishop of St. Andrews, by which the parties mutually bound themselves to stand by each other against all persons whatsoever. It is supposed that Comyn had obtained a knowledge of this agreement, and that thereupon a conference on the subject of their pretensions took place between him and Bruce, when Bruce is alleged to have proposed either that he should have the crown and Comyn his estates, or that he should have Comyn's estates and Comyn the crown. It was agreed that Bruce's title to the crown should be supported by both. With whatever views Comyn may have entered into this negotiation, he eventually (so proceeds the story) communicated all that had taken place to Edward. Bruce, then in England, received the first intimation of his danger from Edward's son-in-law, the earl of Gloucester. Early the next morning Bruce set out for Scotland.

On his way he met a person on foot, whom he found to be the bearer of letters from Comyn to Edward, urging his death or immediate imprisonment. He slew this man, and with the letters in his possession pressed forward to the castle of Lochmaben. The adjuncts of this story, it must be confessed, are more like fiction than fact. It is certain, however, that on the 10th of February, 1306, Bruce and Comyn met alone in the convent of the Minorites at Dumfries, and that there, a passionate altercation having arisen between them, Bruce drew his dagger and stabbed Comyn as they stood together beside the high altar. Hurrying from the sanctuary, he called "To horse!" and when his attendant, seeing him pale and violently agitated, inquired the cause—"I doubt," he replied, "I have slain Comyn." "You doubt?" exclaimed Roger Kirkpatrick; "I'll make sure." And with these words he rushed into the church and gave the wounded man his death-stroke.

[1306 A.D.]

Whatever might have been Bruce's previous plans, there was no room for doubt or hesitation now. He called his friends around him—they were few in number; but, desperate as the hazard looked, there were some gallant spirits that did not shrink from setting their lives upon another cast for the freedom of their country. The bishops of St. Andrews and Glasgow, the abbot of Scone, Bruce's four brothers, Edward, Nigel, Thomas, and Alexander, his nephew Thomas Randolph, his brother-in-law Christopher Seton, and some ten or twelve others, mostly young men, gathered at the summons. They met at Glasgow, and thence rode to Scone, where Bruce was solemnly crowned on the 27th of March.

EDWARD'S LAST INVASION OF SCOTLAND

Edward was at Winchester when the news of this revolution was brought to him. He immediately sent forward the earl of Pembroke, at the head of a small army, to check the insurgents; and, advanced in years as he now was, proceeded to make ready to follow in person. In preparation for the expedition, proclamation was made that the prince of Wales would be knighted on the feast of Pentecost. On the eve of the appointed day (the 22d of May), 270 noble youths assembled in the gardens of the Temple, in which the trees were cut down that they might pitch their tents; and there they watched their arms all night, according to the usage of chivalry. On the morrow Prince Edward was knighted by his father, and then conferred that honour on his companions. A magnificent feast followed, at which two swans, covered with nets of gold, being set on the table by the minstrels, the king rose and made a solemn vow to God and to the swans that he would avenge the death of Comyn, and punish the perfidy of the Scottish rebels; and then, addressing his son and the rest of the company, he conjured them, in the event of his death, to keep his body unburied until his successor should have accomplished this vow. The next morning the prince with his companions departed for the borders; Edward himself followed by slow journeys, being able to travel only in a litter.

Meanwhile, Bruce had acquired such strength that in several parts of the country the officers of Edward had fled in terror. He now marched upon Perth, where the earl of Pembroke lay. That same evening (June 19th) the English fell by surprise upon the Scots: it was rather a rout than a battle; Bruce himself was in the greatest danger, having been three times unhorsed; Randolph and others of his friends were taken; and he with difficulty made good his retreat into the fastnesses of Athol, with about five hundred followers —the broken and dispirited remnant of his force. For many months after this he and his friends were houseless fugitives; a price was set upon their heads: to make their difficulties and sufferings the greater, they were joined after some time by a party of their wives and daughters; and as they penetrated further and further into the depths of the Highlands, to avoid the English troops, their miseries became daily more pressing. At last Bruce's queen and the other ladies were conducted by his young brother Nigel to the castle of Kildrummy; and Bruce himself found means to pass over to the little isle of Rathlin on the coast of Ireland.

While the Scottish king lay concealed here, ruin fell upon almost all the connections and adherents he had left behind. The bishops of St. Andrews and Glasgow and the abbot of Scone had fallen into the hands of the English:

they were taken clad in armour, and were immediately sent, so attired, and in fetters, to England, and there consigned to different prisons. Bruce's queen and his daughter Marjory, having taken refuge in the sanctuary of St. Duthac, at Tain, in Ross, were seized there by the earl of Ross. The knights who were with them were put to death, and they themselves were sent to England, where they endured an imprisonment of eight years. The youthful Nigel Bruce was compelled to surrender the castle of Kildrummy, and, being sent in irons to Berwick, was there hanged and afterwards beheaded, along with divers other knights and gallant men. Christopher Seton suffered a similar death at Dumfries, the earl of Athol and Sir Simon Fraser in London, and many others there and elsewhere.

Bruce, however, had not been idle in his winter retreat; and early in the spring of 1307 he passed over from Rathlin to the isle of Arran, with a company of about three hundred men, embarked in thirty-three galleys. Before venturing to the opposite coast, he despatched one of his followers to ascertain what were the dispositions of the people. When the Scots approached the landing-place Bruce's emissary stood on the shore. He told them that the English were in complete possession of Carrick; that Lord Percy, with a numerous garrison, held the castle of Turnberry; and that there was no hope of a rising in favour of Bruce. Bruce hesitated what to do; but his brother Edward boldly declared for pursuing their enterprise. They immediately attacked a body of the English, and succeeded in putting most of them to the sword. Percy did not dare, in his ignorance of the numbers of the enemy, to come forth from the castle.

After this exploit Bruce sought shelter in the mountainous parts of the country. But the blow he had struck sufficed to rekindle the war, and it soon raged in different quarters. In the beginning of February, Bruce's brothers, Thomas and Alexander, with a band of eleven hundred adventurers from Ireland, were routed in Galloway by Duncan MacDowal, a chief of that region, who immediately carried the two brothers, who had fallen into his hands severely wounded, to the English king at Carlisle. Edward ordered both to instant execution. Some weeks after this, Douglas castle, which was held by Lord Clifford, was gallantly surprised by its former owner, Sir James Douglas, one of Bruce's most distinguished followers. It was some time, however, before Bruce was strong enough to show himself openly in the field; and he was frequently again in great personal danger as he skulked from one hiding-place to another in the wilds of Galloway. But at length he ventured to encounter the earl of Pembroke at Loudoun Hill, when, notwithstanding a great inferiority of numbers, he obtained a complete victory. This action was fought on the 10th of May, 1307. Three days after, he attacked another English force under the command of the earl of Gloucester; and this, too, he succeeded in routing with great slaughter.

King Edward all this while had advanced no further than to Carlisle, having been detained all the winter and spring at Lanercost by a serious illness. He had directed all the late operations of the war from his sick-bed; but now, incensed at the continued progress of the insurrection, he offered up the litter on which he had thus far been carried in the cathedral church of Carlisle, and again mounting on horseback gave orders to proceed towards the borders. It was the effort of a dying man. In four days he advanced about six miles, when, having reached the village of Burgh-upon-Sands, he there stopped once more for the night; and on the morning of the next day, the 7th of July, expired, in the sixty-ninth year of his age and thirty-fifth

[1307 A.D.]

of his reign. His last breath was spent in enjoining upon those who should succeed him the prosecution of the great design of his life—the complete subjugation of Scotland.[d]

PARLIAMENTARY GROWTH DURING THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

In a constitutional point of view, as well as in many others, the thirteenth century may be deemed the most important of all periods in English history. It is the time during which our nation, our laws, our language, finally assimilated whatever was to be assimilated of the foreign elements brought in by the Norman Conquest, and finally threw off whatever was to be thrown off. At the beginning of the period we saw the English nation debating between an Angevin and a French king. At the end of it England, as England, is a great European power, waging war on the Continent for the conquest of France. It is during this time that most of the things which go to make up the national life put on their later form. Above all things, this was the case with the great council of the English nation. During this period the name of Parliament became finally established. The name is a translation of an Old-English phrase. The Conqueror is said in the *English Chronicle* to have had "very deep speech with his witan." This deep speech, in Latin *colloquium*, in French *parlement*, was the distinguishing feature of a meeting between king and people; in the end it gave its name to the assembly itself.

The constitution of the assembly, as defined in the Great Charter, did not absolutely imply representation, but it showed that the full establishment of representation could not be long delayed. The work of this period was to call up, alongside of the gathering of prelates, earls, and other great men specially summoned, into which the ancient witenagemot had shrunk up, another assembly directly representing all other classes of the nation which enjoyed political rights. This assembly, chosen by various local bodies, *communitates* or *universitates*, having a *quasi* corporate being, came gradually to bear the name of the Commons. The knights of the shire, the barons, citizens, and burgesses of the towns were severally chosen by the *communa* or *communitas* of that part of the people which they represented. We thus get the two Houses of Lords and Commons, of which we have seen foreshadowings getting more and more clear from the days of the Conqueror onwards. But it was only gradually fixed that the members of the national council should sit in two bodies, and not in one or in more than two. The notion of local representation, by which shires and boroughs chose representatives of their own communities, had to some extent to strive with another doctrine—that of the representation of "estates" or classes of men. The thirteenth century was the age when the national assemblies, not only of England but of most other European countries, were putting on their definite shape; and in most of them the system of estates prevailed. These in most countries were three: clergy, nobles, and commons. By these last were commonly meant only the communities of the chartered towns, while the *noblesse* of foreign countries answered to the lesser barons and knights, who in England were reckoned among the commons.

The English system thus went far to take in the whole free population, while the estates of other countries, the commons no less than the clergy and nobles, must be looked on as privileged bodies. In England there were in truth no estates; there were no nobility in the foreign sense. Such a nobility

was inconsistent with the institution of peerage, which gradually grew out of the practice of personal summons. The English peerage is strictly official. The great fact is that, while at the beginning of the thirteenth century the name and the constitution of the national assembly were still unsettled, at the beginning of the fourteenth century there was a regular parliament of lords and commons. The chief point which still remained unsettled was the position of the estate of the clergy.

ASSEMBLIES UNDER HENRY III

This seems to be the general result of the constitutional growth of the thirteenth century. Leaving the minuter details, we may here mark some of the chief steps in the progress. During the reign of Henry III assemblies were constantly held, and their constitution is often vaguely described. But in a great many cases phrases are used which, however vague, imply a popular element. We read of knights, of tenants-in-chief, of freemen, sometimes even of freemen and villeins, sometimes, more vaguely still, of *universi*, *universitas Angliæ*, and the like. In some cases we are able better to interpret these vague phrases. For instance, in 1224 each shire sends four knights chosen by the *milites et probi homines*. Whether these knights were or were not to vote along with the magnates, they were at all events to transact business with them. We must always remember that in these times formal voting in the modern sense is hardly to be looked for. In 1254 we have a distinct case of two knights summoned from each shire by royal writ. In the Oxford parliament of 1258 four knights are ordered to be chosen in each shire, who are to report to another parliament within the same year. At that parliament they seem to appear by the title of *Communitas Bachelariæ Angliæ*.

It may be doubted whether this is strictly a case of the knights acting as part of the parliament. Still, every instance of the kind must have helped to strengthen the growing doctrine of representation. From this time the attendance of elected knights seems to be fully established, and along with the knights we find in many cases distinct representatives of the clergy. It is in Earl Simon's parliament of 1265 that we first find distinct representatives of the boroughs. Each county sends two knights, each city or borough two citizens or burgesses, and the Cinque Ports four each. But this same parliament shows how fluctuating the practice of summons still was. The earl, strong among the clergy, strong among the people at large, was much less strong among the great men of the realm. Besides summoning the citizens for the first time, he summoned a crowd of churchmen, regular and secular, greater than appeared in any other parliament. But he summoned only five earls, including himself, those, namely, whom he could trust. We should call such a body a packed parliament; but for a long time every parliament was a packed parliament. That is to say, some barons, some abbots were always personally summoned, some towns were always called on to send representatives; but the barons, the abbots, and the represented towns were by no means the same in every parliament. This kind of irregularity is always found till institutions have finally stiffened into some particular shape. Our whole law and constitution rests far more on precedent than on formal enactments, and in unsettled times precedents are slow in establishing themselves.

PARLIAMENTS OF EDWARD I

The parliament of 1265 was the model parliament—the assembly whose pattern, in its essential features, set the standard which was in the end followed, and which has lasted till our own time. But the pattern which it set did not become the invariable rule till the great parliament of 1295. In the earlier parliaments of Edward I the knights and citizens are often mentioned; but, on the other hand, we meet also with the same vague descriptions as in earlier times. But in 1295 Edward definitely adopted the model which Simon has set him, and the summoning of knights, citizens, and burgesses, though with great irregularity as to the places from which representatives were summoned, has ever since been the rule. It was thus under Edward I that parliament finally put on the essentials of its present form. But we must still allow for irregularities in practice. It does not follow that every enactment was always passed with the consent of all the classes of which the parliament was made up. A doctrine had come in that the king was the legislator, that the votes of the parliament, or of any part of it, were petitions which he could accept or reject, or, again, that he might legislate on a petition from one house or branch of the assembly apart from the others. The national council had now won back its ancient constitution as an assembly of the freemen of the realm, either personally or by representation. But it was only step by step that it won back the full powers of the ancient witenagemot. There are some, indeed, which it still shrinks from exercising directly, some which it shrinks from exercising at all.

LEGISLATION UNDER HENRY III AND EDWARD I

The reign of Henry III was a reign of constant parliamentary action, but it was not a time rich in legislation in the strictest sense. The most direct case of change in the law during Henry's reign was the abolition of the ordeal at its beginning. This led incidentally to further changes in judicial procedure, and it is one of the chief landmarks in the development of the jury system. But it is in itself not so much independent legislation as the application to England of a decree of a general council of the church. In short, the parliaments of Henry III are less famous for changing the law than for refusing to change it. The famous saying *Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari* dates from the council of Merton in 1236, when the barons refused to agree to the proposal of the prelates for assimilating the law of England to the civil and canon law in the matter of children born before wedlock. By the former systems of jurisprudence, the subsequent marriage of their parents admitted them to the rights of legitimate birth. But the barons chose to maintain the harsher rule of the common law of England.

But if the reign of Henry III was not a time rich in legislation, it forms an important stage in the growth of our parliamentary life. The chief work of that reign was that the first steps were taken towards the practical establishment of the doctrine set forth in the omitted clauses of the Great Charter, the doctrine, in modern phrase, that the power of the purse belongs to parliament. In Henry's day England and her parliament had to wage a never-ending strife against her two enemies, king and pope. The main duty of the nation was to withstand the extortions of both alike. The king was always asking for money; the conditions of a grant commonly were that the charters

should be again confirmed and be better observed. And gradually another demand arises, that the great officers of state shall be appointed, if not by parliament, at least with the assent of parliament. But demands like these, demands for the removal of aliens and the like, are all demands for the reform of abuses and the execution of the old laws; new laws are never asked for. The Oxford Provisions of 1258 show the ideas of reform which were then entertained; it is not legislation, it is reform of bad administration, even at the cost of transferring the king's authority to other hands, which is asked for. Simon himself, the greatest of constitutional reformers, was not a legislator. His parliament is famous, not for anything that it did, but for what it was. Nor after Simon's fall do we meet with much legislation strictly so called. The ordinances of Kenilworth and Marlborough are ordinances for the settlement of the kingdom, ordinances for the better observance of the charter and of the statutes of 1259. They are not legislation in the strictest sense, the enactment of absolutely new laws.

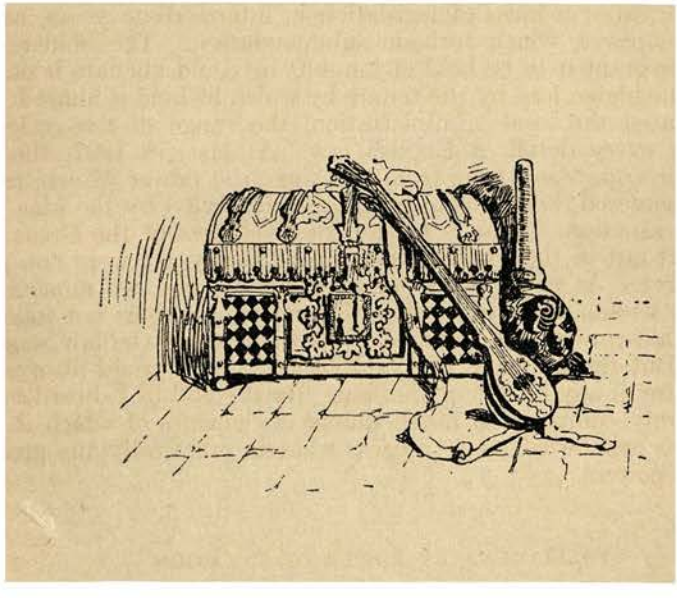
On the other hand, the reign of Edward I, like the reign of Henry II, is emphatically a time of legislation strictly so called, as well as of constitutional progress. At no time were so many memorable statutes passed. Edward's first great act, the first Statute of Westminster, in 1275, has been described as "almost a code by itself." But it was followed almost yearly by enactment upon enactment. The statute *de religiosis* in 1279 forbade the alienation of lands in mortmain without the consent of the superior lord. Ten years later, after a mass of legislation in intermediate years, came the statute *quia emptores*, which forbade subinfeudation. The holder of land could no longer grant it to be held of himself; he could alienate it only so as to be held of the higher lord by the tenure by which he held it himself. Other statutes regulated the local administration, the range of the ecclesiastical courts, almost every detail of English law. At last, in 1297, the famous *Confirmatio Cartarum* was wrung from the king; the power of arbitrary taxation was surrendered; no tax is any longer to be levied by the king without parliamentary sanction. That is to say, those clauses of the Great Charter which were left out in the confirmations under Henry III were now restored and put in force. As in all other things in these ages, we must allow for what seems to us amazing irregularity of practice. It does not follow that, because a certain course was ordained by law, therefore the law was always carried out. But the principle was established, and it could always be appealed to in case of any breach of the law. By the end of Edward's reign, a national assembly, composed of much the same elements of which it is composed still, was acknowledged to possess what is practically the greatest of parliamentary powers.

PARLIAMENTARY POWER OF TAXATION

The extreme legislative activity of this reign is one of many signs that the immediate effects of the Norman Conquest had now quite passed away. A thoroughly united nation, which had forgotten the foreign origin of certain classes of the nation, could bear to have new laws enacted, to have old institutions put into new forms. But the particular form which the great constitutional triumph of this reign took looks both forward and backward. It looks forward, as showing that we have reached what is really modern history. The parliamentary power of the purse is the ruling principle of all later constitutional struggles. But it also looks backward. An ancient witenagemot

[1307 A.D.]

possessed the power of the purse, like all other powers. But in those days the power of the purse was a power of secondary importance. In early times taxation never holds the same prominent place in politics which it does afterwards. But the rule of a series of kings in whose eyes kingship was rather a possession than an office, in whose eyes the kingdom was an estate out of which they had to squeeze the greatest possible income, had made it the most needful thing of all to check the king's power of taking his subjects' money. From this time each parliamentary struggle takes the form of a bargain. The king will redress such and such a grievance, if he receives such and such a grant. By constantly pressing this new power, parliament, and above all that house of parliament in which the power of the purse came to be specially lodged, has gradually won back the powers of the older assemblies. It no longer in form makes war and peace, or elects and deposes kings. It does not even in form elect or depose their ministers. But the body which can grant or refuse the means of carrying on the machinery of government has gradually come to have, in an indirect way, the powers of government once more in its own hands.[e]



CHAPTER XII

EDWARD II AND EDWARD III

[1307–1377 A.D.]

EDWARD II AND PIERS GAVESTON

EDWARD of Carnarvon was twenty-three years old when his father died. His elder brother, Alfonso, died the year after Edward was born. His mother, Eleanor of Castile, died when this, her only surviving son, was seven years old. That excellent mother would probably have guided his course better than his stern father. The crosses which were erected on the road by which her funeral passed from Grantham to Westminster preserved her memory for generations amongst the English, and called forth many a prayer for the repose of her soul. Edward probably forgot that memory in the wild excesses of his youth. Under the year 1300, Fabyan,[c] the chronicler, writes: "This year, the king, for complaint that was brought unto him by Master Walter Langton, bishop of Chester, of Sir Edward, his eldest son, for that he, with Piers of Gaveston and other insolent persons, had broken the park of the said bishop, and riotously destroyed the game within it, he therefore imprisoned the said Sir Edward, his son, with his accomplices." On a subsequent occasion, when the prince was in his twenty-first year, he had a quarrel with the same bishop; and the king then forbade him entering his presence, and issued an order to the exchequer that sustenance should be denied to him and his followers.

There are many letters of the young Edward, which, it is said, "evince his readiness of disposition to assist those who stood in need of his interference and bounty." This kindliness of nature is not incompatible with his

impulsive character—a combination of a weak understanding with a passionate will. He was not wanting in courage; for at seventeen he was leading a battalion against the Scots on the banks of the Irvine. In 1303 he was again with his father in Scotland. In 1306 he preceded his father in the expedition against Bruce; and he then marked his course by such unsparing devastation that the king, it is asserted, upbraided him with his cruelty. He had not the wisdom of his father to know that leniency is far more effective than terror, under many circumstances. At this crisis the evil tendencies of the young Edward were manifesting themselves in the most offensive manner; for in February, 1307, at a parliament held at Lanercost, an order was issued that Piers Gaveston should be banished forever from the kingdom, as a corruptor of the prince of Wales. In five months the prince had the power, as king, of revoking the sentence of his sagacious father.

On the 8th of July the nobles and others assembled at Carlisle recognised Edward as king, and there did homage. The death of Edward I was unknown in London for more than a fortnight. The young king received homage from some Scottish nobles at Dumfries, and then led his army northward. But he suddenly halted at Cumnock, in Ayrshire. He had recalled Gaveston, who joined him in Scotland. The king departed for London, leaving Aymer de Valence guardian and lieutenant. Before the ensuing Christmas, the ministers of his father were deprived of their employments. Gaveston was loaded with wealth and honour; was created earl of Cornwall; was married to Margaret, the king's niece; and was appointed regent of the kingdom, on the departure of Edward for France to marry Isabella, the daughter of Philip the Fair, the French king. The marriage took place at Boulogne; and on the 24th of February, 1308, Edward was crowned at Westminster. All the old claims to precedence at the coronation of the kings of England were disregarded on this occasion; and the place of greatest honour—to carry the crown and walk before the king in procession—was given to Gaveston. In three days the offended nobles petitioned for the banishment of the favourite. The king referred the matter to a parliament to be held after Easter; and this tribunal would hear of no compromise. Gaveston was sentenced to banishment, and was compelled to swear that he would never return.

In another month it was learned that the infatuated king had appointed him to the government of Ireland. The favourite appears to have conducted himself in this office with courage and ability. There can be no doubt that this Gascon had many chivalric accomplishments. At a tournament he unhorsed the four great English earls who were his bitterest enemies. He was tasteful amidst his prodigal magnificence. The king at length persuaded a party of the nobles to consent to Gaveston's recall; and the pope gave the favourite a dispensation from his oath to remain abroad. Then the court became a scene of perpetual banqueting. Gaveston was supreme; but the great barons looked on in sullen discontent and suppressed hatred. The day of vengeance would come, when Thomas of Lancaster would exact a terrible penalty for the nickname of "the old hog," which the upstart had bestowed upon him; when the earl of Pembroke would remember that he had been called "Joseph the Jew"; and when the earl of Warwick, "the black dog of the wood," would make the sarcastic favourite "feel his teeth."

On the 16th of March (1310) the barons came in arms to a parliament at Westminster; and they enforced the appointment of a committee, under the name of ordainers, to provide for the better regulation of the king's household, and to remedy the grievances of the nation. The moving principle of this strong measure was a hatred of Gaveston. The ordainers sat in the

capital. Edward went to Scotland, but met no enemy, for Bruce had retired beyond the Forth. The English king wintered at Berwick, and the next spring confided the conduct of the Scottish war to his favourite, who conducted himself with courage and prudence. Edward returned to London to meet the ordainers, leaving Gaveston at the castle of Bamborough. In the articles of reform which were presented to the king, it was proposed that all grants which had been made by Edward, since he had issued the commission, should be revoked; that all future grants made without the consent of the baronage should be invalid; that purveyance, except what was ancient and lawful, should be punished as robbery; that new taxes should be abolished; that the great officers of the crown should be chosen by the advice and assent of parliament; and that parliaments should be held once in each year, and oftener, if needful.

Then came a clause decreeing the banishment of Gaveston, for having given bad advice to the king, embezzled the public money, obtained blank charters with the royal seal affixed to them, formed a confederacy of men sworn to live and die with him, and estranged the affections of the king from his subjects. In vain the king struggled with the inexorable ordainers. In vain he protested that he would not consent to what was injurious to the just rights of the crown. Gaveston was exiled, and went to Flanders. In 1312 he was again in England; and the king published a proclamation, stating that the exiled man was a true and loyal subject, and returned in obedience to the royal command. Thomas of Lancaster, the grandson of Henry III, was appointed leader of an association of barons who were ready to resort to force. They assembled a large body of knights at a tournament, and then marched to York, where the king had been joined by Gaveston. Onward they followed the flight of their sovereign to Newcastle, and thence to Scarborough, where Gaveston remained in the castle, whilst the king returned to York. The earls of Surrey and Pembroke besieged the castle; and Gaveston surrendered to the earl of Pembroke, under a pledge of safety for himself, which had been given to the king. From Scarborough he was conducted by Pembroke to Dedington in Oxfordshire, the earl leaving him in the custody of his servants. Before the morning dawned the unfortunate favourite was awakened, and commanded to dress himself. At the gate of Dedington he found himself in the presence of "the black dog of the wood"—the terrible earl of Warwick. He was placed on a mule, and, surrounded by a numerous force, was carried prisoner to Warwick. As he entered the walls of Guy's lofty tower he found himself in the presence of those haughty barons whom he had despised and insulted. His skill in the tournament, his courage in battle, his magnificent apparel, his jewelled rings, his high-sounding titles, his reliance upon the kingly power—all were worthless in this terrible moment. He stood before his enemies, and they sentenced him to die. Out of that grim fortress was Gaveston led to execution. There was a march of a short distance before the cavalcade reached Blacklow Hill, a little knoll on the road near Guy's Cliff, where the judicial murder was accomplished.

BRUCE IN SCOTLAND

During the five years that the peace of England was disturbed by the wretched contest between the king and his barons, which ended in the first signal tragedy of this tragic reign, Robert Bruce was establishing his power in Scotland with a firmness and wisdom that was scarcely to be looked for

[1312 A.D.]

after the rash murder in the church at Dumfries.[1] But he had endured great adversity. Danger and suffering had taught him prudence and moderation. He had wandered in the Highlands with a few followers, subsisting upon the chance products of the chase. He had traversed the great lakes in leaky boats, sheltering from the storm in the fisher's hovel, and deriving lessons of patience and perseverance from noting the efforts of a spider to fix the first thread on which its web was to be woven. He had been hunted by blood-hounds; he had waded in rapid streams to elude their scent; he had defied his enemies single-handed in the mountain-pass and in the river-ford. The fugitive was now an acknowledged sovereign. In 1309 he was recognised as king by the most influential body of Scotland—the clergy—at a general ecclesiastical council held at Dundee. In that year a truce was concluded between England and Scotland, which endured till August, 1310. The renewed war was for some time a succession of contests on the borders, in which exemption from plunder was purchased by the English lords warden by money payment.

In 1312 Bruce besieged [and captured] Perth, which was in the hands of King Edward's officers. One after another the strong places of Scotland were taken by Bruce. He then, encouraged no doubt by the fearful dissensions of England, crossed the Tweed, in 1312, with a large force; burned the towns of Hexham and Corbridge and part of the city of Durham, and penetrated as far as Chester. The terrible calamities of war were brought home to the wretched people of both countries. Whilst Bruce was ravaging Northumberland, some English leader or other was wasting Scotland. Famine always followed these devastations. The corn was trodden down in the fields or burned in the barns. The cottage and the grange in flames marked the progress of a fierce soldiery; and when a town was taken, plunder and massacre went hand in hand. To the Scots these invasions were easier than to the English, from the habits of the people. The forces of Edward came on in shining armour; the knights mounted on their heavy war-horses, and the archers and spearmen marching slowly under their cumbrous panoply.

Froissart*f* has graphically described the mode in which the countrymen of Bruce carried on their warfare: "These Scottish men are right hardy, and sore travelling in harness and in wars; for when they will enter into England, within a day and a night, they will drive their whole host twenty-four miles, for they are all a-horseback, without it be the traundells and laggers of the host, who follow after a-foot. The knights and squires are well horsed, and the common people and others, on little hacks and geldings; and they carry with them no carts, nor chariots, for the diversities of the mountains they must pass through in the country of Northumberland. They take with them no purveyance of bread or wine; for their usage and soberness is such, in time of war, that they will pass in the journey a great long time, with flesh half-sodden, without bread, and drink of the river water, without wine; and they neither care for pots nor pans, for they seethe beasts in their own skins. They are ever sure to find plenty of beasts in the country that they will pass through. Therefore they carry with them none other purveyance, but on their horse; between the saddle and the panel they truss a broad plate of metal, and behind the saddle they will have a little sack full of oatmeal, to the intent that when they have eaten of the sodden flesh, then they lay this plate on the fire and temper a little of the oatmeal; and when the plate is hot, they cast off the thin paste thereon, and so make a little cake in manner

[1 For fuller accounts of Bruce and his followers see the history of Scotland in a later volume.]

of a cracknel or biscuit, and that they eat to comfort withal their stomachs. Wherefore it is no great marvel, though they make greater journeys than other people do."

The details of the sieges of the Scotch castles which the English had garrisoned have much of the interest of romance. "Subtlety and stratagem," to use the expression of Barbour the chronicler, often preceded the onslaught and the capture. So Roxburgh castle was taken, and so Edinburgh. Linlithgow was won through the "subtlety and stratagem" of a peasant named Bennock, "a stout carle and a stour," who had been accustomed to supply the garrison with forage. He concealed soldiers under the hay with which his wagon appeared to be loaded; passed the drawbridge, and, the gates being opened, placed his wagon so that they could not be closed. The concealed men attacked the garrison, and another band who had been in ambush rushed in and completed the work. But these successes were only preliminary to the great blow which was struck for the independence of Scotland.

The king and the nobles of England were at last roused from their intestine quarrels to look at the danger which was gathering around them. It was no longer a war for the conquest of the country which had almost universally acknowledged Bruce as king; it was not a contest for mere feudal superiority. England was in danger. Her towns were burned; her fertile lands were devastated; her people were reduced to the most abject misery, wherever the Scot came with his little hackney and his bag of oatmeal. At a parliament held on the 15th of October, 1313, King Edward and his barons were in some degree reconciled; and it was "with one accord assented and agreed that no one, of what state or condition soever he be, in time to come, be appealed or challenged by reason of the taking, detaining, or death of Piers de Gaveston." At the same time an amnesty was granted to the adherents of Gaveston; and the property which was found in his possession was given up to the king.

THE BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN (1314 A.D.)

Edward Bruce, the brother of King Robert, had been besieging Stirling, and the English governor, Philip de Mowbray, agreed to surrender the castle if not relieved by the 24th of June, the feast of St. John the Baptist. King Edward summoned the military tenants of the English crown to meet him at Berwick on the 11th of June, and levies of foot soldiers were made in the northern counties and in Wales. Those from Wales and the Welsh marches were required by the king because he wanted men able to drive an enemy from forest and mountain, and from marshy places, of difficult access to horsemen. On the 16th of June, only a week before the day fixed for the surrender of Stirling, Edward marched from Berwick at the head of a great army. The numbers of that army were greatly exaggerated by the old chroniclers, Fordun estimating it at 340,000 horse, and as many foot. Later historians are more reasonable, and are contented with 100,000, of which 40,000 were cavalry. This vast force arrived in the neighbourhood of Stirling on the Eve of St. John. The country through which they marched would afford insufficient support and accommodation for such a multitude; and they were accompanied with a vast train of provision-wagons, and of carriages and horses laden with tents and pavilions.

Bruce was encamped in an extensive forest lying between Falkirk and Stirling, known as the Torwood; and here, on the 22d of June, it was learned

[1314 A.D.]

that the English force had reached Edinburgh on the 21st. The Scottish army therefore moved into the neighbourhood of Stirling. Bruce knew that, the first object being the relief of that castle, according to the treaty, he might, therefore, take up a position without uncertainty as to the movements of his enemy. The extreme left of his army rested upon elevated ground above St. Ninians, and extended through an undulating tract of country called the New Park, the right resting on a stream called the Bannock. The centre was partially defended by a morass, part of which still remains. On the left, on a line which the English would have to cross, Bruce caused pits to be dug, in which were inserted pointed stakes, covered slightly over with turf and rushes. He had need of every precaution for strengthening his position, for his force was greatly inferior to that of the English. It chiefly consisted of infantry. His determination was to fight on foot, and to meet the charges of the cavalry with his battle-axes and spears. A few horsemen were with him. On the night of St. John the advanced guard of the English cavalry approached Stirling, with the intention of attacking the Scots in the rear. Bruce's army had fasted, from a religious principle. "Thar dynit none of them that day," says the rhyming chronicler. A partial engagement took place, in which King Robert exposed himself as became the daring knight rather than the cautious general. His leaders, however they were rejoiced to see him cleave the skull of Henry de Bohun in single combat, remonstrated with him on his temerity. He only held up the broken shaft of his battle-axe, and expressed his regret for the loss of his good weapon.

At daybreak of the 24th of June the great host of the English was in view, with bright shields and burnished helmets, embroidered banners and gaudy surcoats, glittering in the morning sun. The Scotch host heard mass, and the abbot of Inchaffray preceded them with a crucifix as they formed on the field of battle. When they knelt again in prayer, some of the English said, "They beg for mercy." "Deceive not yourselves," said one who knew the people, "it is God only they supplicate, and not you." On came the English archers and infantry, and the conflict was long and desperate. Bruce had a reserve which attacked his enemy in flank. The English knights came on, with the earl of Gloucester, the nephew of the king, at their head. He fell covered with wounds. The horses stumbled in the pits which Bruce had dug. There was confusion in the ranks; and the few Scottish horse which were in the field were led by Sir Robert Keith to a victorious struggle. All the camp-followers of Bruce's army had been stationed apart, behind a small hill, still known by the name of Gillieshill (the servants' hill). There were soldiers, no doubt, mixed with them, for they suddenly abandoned the baggage, and came down the hill in a body of fifteen thousand men, armed with pikes and oxen-goads, with rude pieces of cloth fixed on tent-poles in the place of heraldic banners. The English squadrons, at the appearance of this new and strange army, began to waver. Bruce charged the main body. Then ensued a general rout. King Edward refused to fly, till the earl of Pembroke seized his bridle-rein and hurried him from the field.

The king rode to Stirling with the intention of throwing himself into the castle; but the governor, as the battle was lost, knew that he was bound in all honour to deliver up the castle according to his obligation, and Edward sought other refuge. The band of horsemen fled on, and never stopped till they reached Dunbar. The spoil which remained to the victors was enormous. Fordun describes the herds of cattle, the droves of sheep and hogs, the loads of corn with portable mills, the casks of wine, the military engines—trebuchets and mangonels. The slaughter of the English exceeded ten thousand. The

Scots lost about four thousand.[1] Numbers of English and Welsh fugitives were scattered over the country—the knights detained for ransom; the humble footmen put to death by the Scottish peasantry. Stirling was surrendered the day after the battle. In exchange for some of his English prisoners, Bruce obtained the release of his wife, sister, and daughter, of the bishop of Glasgow and the earl of Mar. Thus complete was the great victory that made Scotland a nation; which enabled her, gradually approaching to an amalgamation with England in laws and institutions, in customs and literature, long to preserve a distinctive character; and which, when she names the "Bruce of Bannockburn," wakes up many other sacred memories of struggles for freedom, civil and religious, without which memories, long cherished and never wholly relinquished, no people, however prosperous, ever escaped the yoke of foreign or domestic tyranny.

Fabyan[c] records that, after many days, there was a song sung by the minstrels of Scotland which said:

> Maidens of England, sore may ye mourn,
> For your lemans ye have lost at Bannockbourn.

The maidens, and all the people of England, had many other losses to deplore through these Scotch wars. In 1314 there was a deficient harvest. The price of corn became enormous, and the parliament, with the ignorance of economical laws, which was not in any degree confined to those times, fixed a maximum on the price of provisions. The next season was more disastrous. There was a murrain amongst the cattle and a general pestilence amongst the starving people. The brewing of beer from grain was suspended. The nobles expelled from their castles the hungry retainers for whom they could find no food, and the country necessarily swarmed with plunderers. The "ordinances" which had been agreed to before the fall of Gaveston were resisted by the king, whilst their enforcement was demanded by the barons.

In this horrible condition of famine, pestilence, and anarchy was the unhappy kingdom, when the Scots came, again and again, to plunder and destroy. There was no public spirit in the people or their leaders to resist. A war was going on in Ireland between the English and the Scots. Edward Bruce had landed at Carrickfergus in 1315, to drive the English settlers from the island, in concert with the native chiefs. After various conflicts he was crowned king of Ireland in 1316, and he reigned some time in Ulster. The Welsh were again in insurrection, and formed an alliance with Edward Bruce. Robert, the king of Scotland, had gone over to Ireland to aid his brother. During his absence the war in Scotland had been renewed by the English. But Robert Bruce returned to the land of his triumphs in 1318, and he succeeded in capturing Berwick [as described in detail in the history of Scotland]. The Scots, marching into Yorkshire, burned many towns, and had nearly taken Edward prisoner on one occasion, and his queen on another. An attempt was made to retake Berwick, but it was unsuccessful. At length, in 1320, a truce for two years was concluded "between Edward, king of England, and Sir Robert de Brus, for himself and his adherents." The Irish invasion had been previously terminated, in 1318, by the death of Edward Bruce, who was defeated in a battle near Dundalk, and fell on the field with

[1] Scotch historians greatly exaggerate these numbers, as if the importance of the victory depended upon the amount of bloodshed. [This account of the battle of Bannockburn is considerably supplemented by the description to be found in a later volume under the history of Scotland.]

two thousand of his countrymen. But no success and no truce could put an end to the intestine troubles of England. Another favourite had arisen, and another war with the barons was impending.

THE DESPENSERS

Many of the important facts in the history of England are written in its statutes. In three acts of parliament of the 15th of Edward II we find the distinct traces of a revolution and of a counter-revolution. In the first of these statutes, that decreeing "the exile of Hugh le Despenser, father and son," we learn that at a parliament held at York in the twelfth year of Edward, Sir Hugh, the son, was named chamberlain of the king. This young man was of high family. His grandfather was killed on the side of the barons at Evesham. His father had served in the wars of Edward I, both in France and Scotland. Edward II was lavish in his bounties to his chamberlain. He united him in marriage with a daughter of that earl of Gloucester who was killed at Bannockburn, by which marriage he became possessed of the greater portion of Glamorganshire. His material wealth, according to a parliamentary document, was enormous. He had flocks of ten thousand sheep; herds of a thousand oxen and cows; hundreds of pigs; arms and armour for two hundred men. The possessions of the father were more than double those of his son. The young Despenser soon became embroiled with his neighbours, the lords of the marches, who, assembling in arms, attacked his castles and destroyed or carried off his property.

The earl of Hereford, the king's brother-in-law, one of the peers appointed to enforce the "ordinances," encouraged this violence; and the earl of Lancaster, the cousin of the king, joined with him and the lords of the marches and other barons and knights in an indenture binding them in a common cause against the power and influence of the Despensers. They marched to London, and on their way plundered the manors of the elder Despenser, as they had those of his son. From St. Albans they sent a message to the king, demanding the banishment of these objects of their hatred; which demand Edward refused with indignation. The confederates advanced to London, where the parliament was sitting; and then was passed the statute of exile of Hugh le Despenser, father and son, "to the honour of God and holy church and of our lord the king, and for the profit of him and his realm, and for maintaining peace and quiet among his people." The offences with which the Despensers were charged are then minutely set forth:

They had accroached to themselves royal power over the king and his ministers; they desired to lead the king to act with violence against his will; they kept the king from showing himself to his people, or giving audience to his great men, except at their will and humour; they removed good and sufficient ministers, and appointed false and evil ministers and unlearned justices; they excited to civil war; they caused the king to impose unreasonable fines; they permitted no bishop or abbot, newly created, to approach the king till they had paid fines to Sir Hugh, the son. Upon these various grounds, the peers of the realm awarded that Hugh, the father, and Hugh, the son, be disinherited forever, and utterly exiled out of the realm, as enemies of the king and his people.

In this parliament, which was held at Westminster in three weeks after midsummer in 1321, indemnity was granted against all men, of whatsoever state or condition, who had done what might be noted for trespasses and

against the king's peace "in pursuing and destroying Hugh le Despenser, the son, and Hugh le Despenser, the father." In a parliament held at York three weeks after Easter, in 1322, this statute of indemnity was repealed, it being shown that it was "sinfully and wrongfully made and granted," and that the assent "of the prelates, earls, barons, knights of shires, and commonalty," assembled in 1321, "was given for dread of the great force which the earl of Hereford and the other great confederates suddenly brought to the parliament of Westminster, with horse and arms, in affray and abasement of all the people." In the same parliament of York the exile of the Despensers was annulled. This was a mighty change to be wrought in eight months.

During that short period there had been a counter-revolution. In October of 1321 King Edward took up arms, ostensibly to revenge an affront offered to his queen; and after capturing Leeds castle, in Kent—to which his queen had been denied admission—led his forces northward. It was alleged that, before the truce of 1319, the earl of Lancaster had been in traitorous correspondence with the Scots, and that through his complicity with Robert Bruce, Berwick had not been recovered by the English. The truce of two years was now about to expire. The Despensers had returned to England, and Lancaster now kept no terms in his opposition to the government of Edward. There can be no doubt that at this period he and the earl of Hereford were in alliance with Bruce. The Scots army was to enter England, to aid the earls and their confederates in their quarrel, but on no account to lay claim to any conquest; and the earls were to use their endeavours that Bruce should enjoy his kingdom in peace. As Edward advanced, Lancaster retired into Yorkshire. At Boroughbridge he was encountered by a strong force, under the governors of York and Carlisle, and here Hereford was killed. Lancaster expected the arrival of his allies from Scotland, but no army came. He was taken prisoner, and was conducted to his own castle of Pontefract, at whose gates he had stood when Edward passed by in returning from the siege of Berwick, and jeered his king with bitter scorn. To that castle Edward now came a triumphant lord; and in his own hall was Lancaster, who at Warwick had adjudged Gaveston to die, arraigned as a traitor. On a gray pony, without a bridle, he was led to execution, and kneeling down on an eminence outside the town his head was struck off. Eighteen others of the confederates were executed in London and other places. Thus it was that the parliament of York, in 1322, passed the statute which we have mentioned.

But they did more than this. They revoked all the "ordinances" which had been made ten years before, it being found that "by the matters so ordained the royal power of our lord the king was restrained on divers things, contrary to what it ought to be." But not only were these "ordinances" repealed, but all provisions "made by subjects against the royal power of the ancestors of our lord the king" were to cease and lose their effect forever. Edward II was now in the plenary possession of sovereign power. He had an obsequious parliament. The great barons who interfered with his will were removed. Hugh le Despenser, the son, might reign supreme in the palace, as he had reigned before. Edward would himself wipe out the disgrace of Bannockburn, and win back Scotland to his crown. He addressed a letter to the pope, stating that having put down the earl of Lancaster, he was engaged in preparing to invade Scotland, desiring no peace between the two kingdoms.

The Scots, anticipating the coming war, entered England and penetrated to Lancashire. They then returned without molestation, laden with immense booty, and driving their wagons bearing the spoil of gold and plate, of fur-

niture and church ornaments, as securely as if they were on a peaceful journey. The king of England was collecting a great army—a machine too cumbrous for effective use. He marched into Scotland with an ill supply of bread for his men and of provender for his horses; for England was still suffering the miseries of scarcity. As the great host of Edward marched on to the Forth, he found a desert. The stores of corn, the herds of the Lothians, had all been removed northward. The houses were deserted. The English fleet, which had been prepared to co-operate with the invading army, was detained by contrary winds. Famine and sickness were doing the work which Bruce waited to complete. King Edward hastily marched back to the border; and King Robert came forth from his encampment at Culross. Douglas began to harass the English in their rear; and Edward, appointing guardians of the marches, retreated to a strong position near Byland abbey, in Yorkshire. The greater part of his army was disbanded. Edward felt himself secure. But a body of Scottish knights suddenly appeared before the abbey and obtained a victory; the king of England fled precipitately to York. The war of twenty-three years with Scotland was at an end. On the 30th of May, 1323, a truce between the two kingdoms was concluded for thirteen years.

THE KNIGHTS TEMPLARS

It was during the revolutionary period of which we have been treating that the great military order of the Templars was dissolved, after having attained the highest authority and influence in Europe during nearly two hundred years. One of the charges against the Despensers was that they prevented justice being done touching the lands of the Templars. When Philip the Fair, king of France, in 1307, suddenly took possession of the palace of the Temple in Paris, and threw the grand master and all his knights into prison, the main object of this despotic act was to obtain possession of the enormous properties of the order throughout France. In England, although the order was suppressed, no cruelties were exercised upon the members of the brotherhood, which had numbered some of the most illustrious of the nobles amongst its knights. In 1308, under sealed directions sent to all the sheriffs in England and Ireland, about two hundred and fifty knights were arrested, and all their property was attached. Before a tribunal of prelates and envoys of the pope, forty-seven of these knights boldly maintained their innocence. The use of torture was urged upon the king, in a letter from the holy pontiff; and the archbishop of York, having ascertained that torture was unknown in England, and that there was no machine for torture in the kingdom, inquired if he should send abroad for such an instrument. None, as it appears, were put upon the rack or burned. They were imprisoned, and had a daily pittance allowed for their support.

Meanwhile, the Hospitallers, or knights of St. John, who had maintained their influence in the East, and continued to make a show of defending Christendom against the Mohammedans, kept their large possessions without molestation, and in their great priory of St. John, in Clerkenwell, maintained as much state as the Templars on the bank of the Thames. At last came the grand question of the revenues of the Templars. After sixteen years, during which the king and his favourites and his nobles partook of the spoil, a statute was passed, in 1324, which recited that, the order of the Templars having been dissolved, the lands and tenements in demesne were seized into the hands of the king and of divers other lords of the fees of them; but that

now, as the order of the brethren of St. John of Jerusalem was provided, instituted, and canonised, for the defence of Christians, the lands and all appurtenances should go to that order, to be employed, as the Templars were bound to employ them, in relieving the poor, in hospitalities, in celebrating divine service, and in defence of the Holy Land. England escaped the guilt of France, in abolishing this powerful body without bloodshed. The knights of St. John held their wealth in England till, two centuries later, their order was suppressed by one before whom lord priors melted away in the common ruin of monastic institutions. In the reign of Edward III the students of law took possession of the great house of the Templars in London; and their preceptories, in the rural districts, fell into decay, or became the homesteads and barns of the descendants of the Saxon villeins whom the proud Norman knights had despised and trampled upon.

ROGER MORTIMER AND QUEEN ISABELLA

One of the principal supporters of the earl of Lancaster, who was beheaded at Pontefract in 1322, was Roger Mortimer, lord of Wigmore. He was spared the extreme penalties of treason, but was confined in the Tower of London. In 1323 he escaped, and proceeded to France. Isabella, the queen of Edward II, was sister to Charles IV of France; and to reconcile some differences between Edward and Charles in the affairs of Gascony, Isabella was deputed to the court of her brother, with power to conclude a treaty. This she accomplished, upon terms not very advantageous to her husband, in May, 1325. In September of the same year the king of England was induced to transfer his foreign possessions of Gascony and Ponthieu to his son Edward, then thirteen years of age; who went to Paris, and there did homage for them to the feudal lord, Charles IV. At Paris, Roger Mortimer joined the queen, and became the chief officer of her household.

The return of Isabella and her son to England, as soon as the homage was performed, was expected by Edward. But they came not. After the lapse of more than five centuries, the private remonstrances of the husband and father are still preserved, in several letters in the French language, which are exceedingly curious. The archbishop of Canterbury had written to Isabella to exhort her to return, to which she had replied that Sir Hugh le Despenser was her enemy, and that she could not come because her life would be in danger. On the 1st of December, 1325, the king thus writes to the queen:

DAME:

Oftentimes we have commanded you, as well before the homage as since, to return to us with all haste, without any excuses. Now, you have sent us word, by the honourable father, the bishop of Winchester, that you will not come, on account of the danger and doubt of Hugh le Despenser; at which we greatly marvel: the more so, that you bore yourself so amicably towards him, and he towards you, in our presence, and even at your departure you gave him especial promises, signs, and proofs of certain friendship; and afterwards sent him very especial letters, which he has shown to us.

The husband then goes on to say that no evil or disgrace has ever befallen her, except when "we have spoken to you, as we ought, words of chastisement in secret, without any other severity." To his son he writes, under date of the 2d of December:

MOST DEAR SON:

Remember in your youth and tender age what we charged and commanded you, when you left us at Dover, and what you said to us in answer, with which we were greatly pleased;

[1325–1326 A.D.]

and do not trespass or contravene what we then charged you in any point, on no account. And since your homage has been received, go to our most dear brother, the king of France, your uncle, and take your leave of him; and then come away to us in the company of our most dear companion, the queen, your mother, if she come so soon. And if she does not come, come you, in all haste without longer stay; for we have a very great desire to see you and speak with you. And hereof fail not by any means, neither for mother, nor for any other person, as you regard our blessing.

But still the wife came not, nor the son. On the 1st of March, 1326, the king again writes to the young Edward, commanding him to contract no marriage without his father's consent; defending Hugh le Despenser as his dear and loyal servant; bitterly adverting to the alliance of Queen Isabella with Roger Mortimer, a false traitor, and the king's mortal enemy; and ordering his son immediately to return. In a letter to the king of France, of the same date, Edward says that he truly perceives, as all men may perceive, that the queen does not love him as she ought to love her lord.

RETURN OF ISABELLA AND PRINCE EDWARD

These domestic differences were soon brought to a public issue. The king of France invaded Gascony, and Edward declared war against him. William, count of Hainault, received Isabella at his court, for the pope had exhorted Charles to dismiss her from Paris. The young Edward was contracted in marriage with Philippa, the daughter of the count. A force of two thousand men, under the command of John of Hainault, was placed at the disposal of Isabella; and on the 24th of September, the wife and the son of Edward did return to England, landing at Orwell in Suffolk, not as suppliants but as complainants, in arms for the redress of injuries. Isabella came surrounded by nobles who had been banished or fled when the insurrection of Lancaster failed. Powerful lords—including the brothers of the king, the earls of Kent and Suffolk, his cousin the earl of Richmond, and several bishops—joined Isabella. A proclamation was issued, stating that the queen, the prince, and the earl of Kent had come to free the nation from the tyranny of Hugh le Despenser.[b]

At the queen's approach towards the capital, Edward, as a last resource, threw himself on the loyalty and pity of the citizens. Their answer was cold but intelligible. The privileges of the city would not, they observed, permit them to follow the king into the field, but they would shut the gates against the foreigners, and would on all occasions pay due respect to their sovereign, his queen, and his son. Edward immediately departed with the two Despensers, the chancellor Baldock, and a slender retinue; and soon after his departure the populace rose, murdered Walter Stapleton, the bishop of Exeter, took forcible possession of the Tower, and liberated the prisoners. The fugitive monarch hastened to the marches of Wales, where lay the estates of his favourite. Bristol was given to the custody of the elder Despenser, earl of Winchester, and at Caerphilly an attempt was made to raise the men of Glamorgan. But the Welshmen were equally indifferent to the distress of their lord and of their sovereign; and Edward with his favourite took ship for Lundy, a small isle in the mouth of the Bristol Channel, which had been previously fortified and plentifully stored with provisions.

The queen was not slow to pursue her fugitive consort. As she passed through Oxford, she commanded Orlton [bishop of Hereford] to preach before the university. The bishop selected for his text that passage in

Genesis, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. She shall bruise thy head." These words he applied to Isabella and the Despensers; but many thought that they discovered in the sermon dark and prophetic allusions to the fate which afterwards befel the unfortunate Edward. From Oxford she hastened to Bristol; and the elder Despenser, unable to master the disaffection of the burghers, surrendered the town and castle on the third day. His gray hairs (he had passed his ninetieth year) were not respected by his enemies; and he was accused before Sir William Trussel, one of the exiles raised by Isabella to the office of judge, of having assumed an undue influence over the king, exercised the royal power, widened the breach between the sovereign and the people, and advised the execution of the earl of Lancaster. In these tumultuous times the liberty of defence was seldom allowed to a political prisoner, but the notoriety of the facts charged in the indictment was assumed as a justification of the sentence which immediately followed. The earl was drawn from the court to the place of execution, where his enemies glutted their revenge with the sight of his sufferings. He was disembowelled alive; his body was afterwards hung on a gibbet for four days, and then cut into pieces and thrown to the dogs.

JOHN OF ELTHAM
(Son of Edward II)

At Bristol it was ascertained that Edward had put to sea; and a proclamation was immediately made through the town, summoning him to return and resume the government. This farce was preparatory to an important decision of the prelates and barons in the queen's interest. Assuming the powers of parliament, they resolved that by the king's absence the realm had been left without a ruler; and therefore appointed the "duke of Aquitaine" guardian of the kingdom in the name and by the right of his father. Edward's evil fortune pursued him by sea as well as land. He was unable to reach the isle of Lundy; and after contending for some days with a strong westerly wind, he landed at Swansea, retired to Neath, and sought to elude the search of his enemies by concealing himself in different places between that monastery and the castle of Caerphilly, held by his partisan, John de Felton.

At length, Henry, earl of Leicester, who had lately taken the title of his attainted brother, the earl of Lancaster, corrupted the fidelity of the natives, and got possession of the younger Despenser and Baldock, who were secreted in the woods near the castle of Lantressan. Edward, it is said, immediately came forward, and voluntarily surrendered to his cousin, by whom he was sent to the strong fortress of Kenilworth. His fate was postponed to answer the purposes of his wife; the other captives were sacrificed without mercy to the resentment of their enemies. Baldock, as a clergyman, was confined

first in the prison of the bishop of Hereford, and afterwards in that of Newgate, where he sank under the rigours of his captivity; Despenser was arraigned at Hereford before the same judge whose hands were still reeking with the blood of his father. The offences laid to his charge form the best proof of his innocence. According to Trussel, he had been the cause of every calamity which had befallen the kingdom since his return from banishment, of the failure of the king's expedition into Scotland, and of the success of the Scottish incursions into England. He had not only prosecuted the earl of Lancaster and his adherents to death, but when God had demonstrated the virtue of that nobleman by the supernatural cures wrought at his tomb, he had placed guards to prevent the afflux of the people, and to suppress the knowledge of the miracles; he had constantly fomented the dissension between Edward and his consort; had hired assassins to murder the queen and the prince when they were in France; and at their return had conveyed away the king and the royal treasures against the provisions of the Great Charter.

"Therefore," continues this upright judge, "do all the good men of this realm, lesser and greater, poor and rich, award with common assent that you, Hugh Spenser, as a robber, traitor, and outlaw, be drawn, hanged, disembowelled, beheaded, and quartered. Away then, traitor; go, receive the reward of your tyranny, wicked and attainted traitor!" He was drawn in a black gown with the arms of his family reversed, and a wreath of nettles on his head, and was hanged on a gallows fifty feet high, amidst the acclamations and scoffs of the populace. A few yards below him suffered Simon de Reading, a faithful servant, who had always adhered to the fortunes of his master. Besides these the earl of Arundel and two other gentlemen were beheaded. They had remained neutral during the invasion, but were accused of having consented to the death of the earl of Lancaster. In the opinion of the public, their chief crime was the contiguity of their possessions to those of the queen's favourite, to whom they were granted.

DEPOSITION OF THE KING

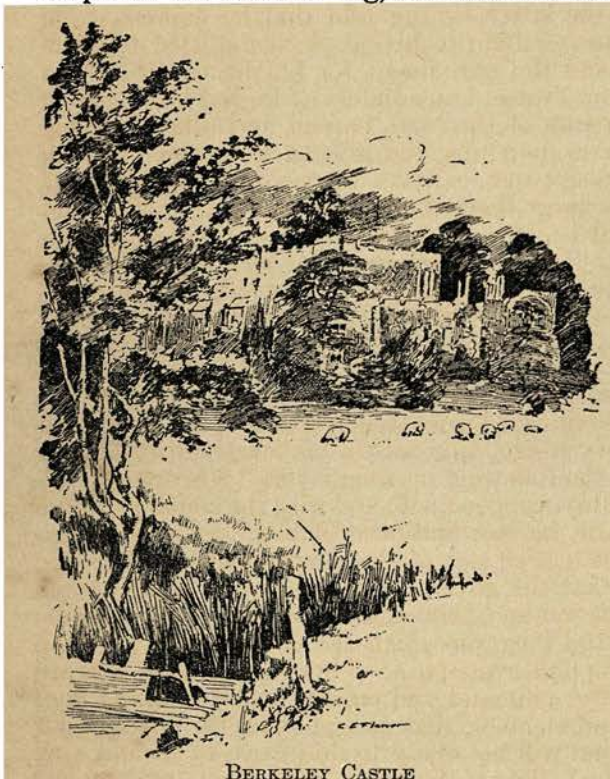
From Hereford Isabella with Mortimer and her son proceeded by slow journeys to meet the parliament at Westminster. The session was opened by a long speech from that crafty politician, the bishop of Hereford. The removal of the Despensers from the person of the king, the only ostensible object of the party, had now been effected, and it was natural to ask why Edward, in whose name the parliament had been summoned,[1] was not restored to the exercise of the royal authority. To obviate this difficulty, the bishop painted in strong colours the vindictive disposition which it suited him to ascribe to the captive monarch, and solemnly declared that to liberate him now would be to expose to certain death the princess, who by her wisdom and courage had so lately freed the realm from the tyranny of the royal favourites.

He therefore requested them to retire, and to return the next day, prepared to answer this important question—whether it were better that the father should retain the crown, or that the son should reign in the place of his father. At the appointed hour the hall was filled with the most riotous of the citizens of London, whose shouts and menaces were heard in the room

[1] The first writs had been tested by the prince as guardian of the realm; but this supposed Edward to be absent, and other writs, proroguing the meeting of parliament, were issued *teste rege*, though he was in reality a prisoner.

occupied by the parliament. Not a voice was raised in the king's favour. His greatest friends thought it a proof of courage to remain silent. The young Edward was declared king by acclamation, and presented in that capacity to the approbation of the populace. The temporal peers with many of the prelates publicly swore fealty to the new sovereign; the archbishop of York, and the bishops of London, Rochester, and Carlisle, though summoned by the justiciaries, had the resolution to refuse.

These irregular proceedings had probably been pursued to extort from the members an assent, from which they could not afterwards recede. Though the prince was declared king, his father had neither resigned nor been deposed. To remedy the defect, a bill of six articles was exhibited against Edward by Stratford, bishop of Winchester, charging him with indolence, incapacity, the loss of the crown of Scotland, the violation of the coronation oath, oppression of the church, and cruelty to the barons. In the presence of the young prince seated on the throne, these charges were read and approved; and it was resolved that the reign of Edward of Carnarvon had ceased, and that the sceptre should be intrusted to the hands of his son, Edward of Windsor.



BERKELEY CASTLE
(An ancient baronial castle, still occupied as a dwelling. Edward II was murdered here in 1327)

When this resolution was reported to the queen, she acted a part which could deceive no one. With the most violent expressions of grief, she lamented the misfortune of her husband, declared that the parliament had exceeded its legitimate powers, and exhorted her son to refuse a crown which belonged to his father. To silence her pretended scruples, a deputation was appointed consisting of prelates, earls, barons, knights, citizens, and burgesses. They were instructed to proceed to Kenilworth, to give notice to Edward of the election of his son, to procure from him a voluntary resignation of the crown, and, if he refused, to give him back their homage, and to act as circumstances might suggest.

The bishops of Winchester and Lincoln, a secret and an open enemy, were the first who arrived. They employed arguments, and promises, and threats to obtain the consent of the unfortunate king; spoke of the greatness of mind he would display, and of the reward he would deserve, by renouncing the crown to restore peace to his people; promised him in the event of his compliance the enjoyment of a princely revenue and establishment; and

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threatened, if he refused, not only to depose him, but to pass by his son and choose a sovereign from another family. When they had sufficiently worked on his hopes and fears, they led him, dressed in a plain black gown, into the room in which the deputation had been arranged to receive him. At the sight of Orlton, his mortal enemy, who advanced to address him, he started back, and sank to the ground, but in a short time recovered sufficiently to attend to the speech of that prelate.

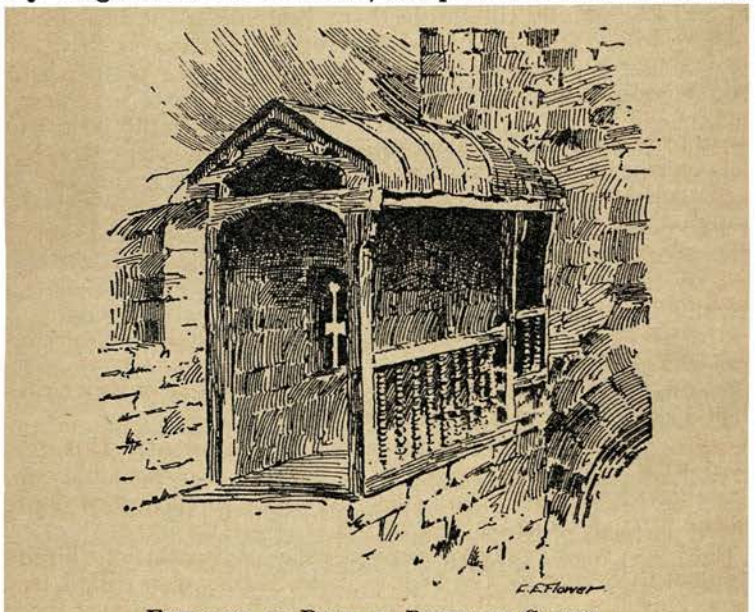
His answer has been differently reported by his friends and opponents. According to the former, he replied that no act of his could be deemed free, as long as he remained a prisoner; but that he should endeavour to bear patiently whatever might happen. By the latter we are told that he expressed his sorrow for having given such provocation to his people; submitted to what he could not avert; and thanked the parliament for having continued the crown in his family. Sir William Trussel immediately addressed him in these words: "I, William Trussel, proctor of the earls, barons, and others, having for this full and sufficient power, do render and give back to you Edward, once king of England, the homage and fealty of the persons named in my procuracy; and acquit and discharge them thereof, in the best manner that law and custom will give. And I now make protestation in their name that they will no longer be in your fealty or allegiance, nor claim to hold anything of you as king, but will account you hereafter as a private person, without any manner of royal dignity." The distressing ceremony was closed by the act of Sir Thomas Blount, the steward of the household, who, as was always done at the king's death, broke his staff of office, and declared that all persons engaged in the royal service were discharged.

In three days the deputation returned from Kenilworth, and the next morning the accession of the new sovereign, who was in his fourteenth year, was proclaimed by the heralds in the following unusual form: "Whereas Sir Edward, late king of England, of his own good will, and with the common advice and assent of the prelates, earls, barons, and other nobles, and all the commonalty of the realm, has put himself out of the government of the realm, and has granted and willed that the government of the said realm should come to Sir Edward, his eldest son and heir, and that he should govern the kingdom, and should be crowned king, on which account all the lords have done him homage; we cry and publish the peace of our said lord Sir Edward the son, and on his part strictly command and enjoin, under pain and peril of disherison, and loss of life and member, that no one break the peace of our said lord the king; for he is, and will be, ready to do justice to all and each of the said kingdom, both to the little and the great, in all things, and against all men. And if anyone have a claim against another, let him proceed by way of action, and not by violence or force." The same assertion, that the late king had resigned of his own free will with the consent of his parliament was unblushingly repeated at the coronation of the young prince.

DEATH AND CHARACTER OF EDWARD II

Edward of Carnarvon (for so we must now call him) was destined to add one to the long catalogue of princes to whom the loss of a crown has been but the prelude to the loss of life. The attention of the earl of Lancaster to alleviate the sufferings of his captive did not accord with the views of the queen and her paramour. He was given to the custody of Sir John de Maltravers, a man who, by his former sufferings, had proved his attachment to the party.

To conceal the place of Edward's residence, he successively transferred the prisoner from Kenilworth to Corfe, Bristol, and Berkeley, and by the indignities which were offered to him, and the severities which were inflicted, laboured to deprive him of his reason or to shorten his life. It was in vain that the deposed monarch solicited an interview with his wife, or to be indulged with the company of his children. Isabella had not the courage to face the husband whom she had so cruelly injured, nor would she trust her sons in the presence of their father. Though in possession of the sovereign power, she was still harassed with the most gloomy apprehensions. In several parts of the kingdom associations were known to exist for the avowed purpose of liberating the captive; her scandalous connection with Mortimer was publicly noticed by the clergy in their sermons; and there was reason to fear that the church might compel her by censures to cohabit with her consort. To prevent the last she had recourse to her usual expedient. As her son led an army against the Scots, she called an assembly of prelates and barons at Stamford, laid before them her pretended reasons for dreading the sanguinary vengeance of her husband, and prevailed on them to declare that,



ENTRANCE TO ROOM IN BERKELEY CASTLE
(This room was the scene of the crime)

even if she desired it, they would not permit her to return to the society of Edward of Carnarvon.

Thomas Lord Berkeley, the owner of Berkeley castle, was now joined with Sir John Maltravers in the commission of guarding the captive monarch. It chanced that the former was detained at his manor of Bradley by a dangerous malady, during which the duty of watching the king devolved on two of his officers, Thomas Gournay and William Ogle. One night, while he was under their charge, the inmates of the castle were alarmed by the shrieks which issued from his apartment; the next morning the neighbouring gentry, with the citizens of Bristol, were invited to behold his dead body. Externally

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it exhibited no marks of violence; but the distortion of the features betrayed the horrible agonies in which he had expired; and it was confidently whispered that his death had been procured by the forcible introduction of a red-hot iron into the bowels. No further investigation was made; and the corpse was privately interred in the abbey church of St. Peter in Gloucester.[1]

TOWER ATTACHED TO KEEP OF BERKELEY CASTLE

(Showing window of fatal room)

The first Edward had been in disposition a tyrant. As often as he dared, he had trampled on the liberties or invaded the property of his subjects; and yet he died in his bed, respected by his barons, and admired by his contemporaries. His son, the second Edward, was of a less imperious character; no acts of injustice or oppression were imputed to him by his greatest enemies; yet he was deposed from the throne and murdered in a prison. Of this difference between the lot of the father and the son the solution must be sought in the manners and character of the age. They both reigned over proud and factious nobles, jealous of their own liberties, but regardless of the liberties of others; and who, though they respected the arbitrary sway of a monarch as haughty and violent as themselves, despised the milder and more equitable administration of his successor. That successor, naturally easy and indolent, fond of the pleasures of the table and the amusements of the chase, willingly devolved on others the cares and labours of government. But in an age unacquainted with the more modern expedient of a responsible minister, the barons considered the elevation of the favourite as their own depression, his power as the infringement of their rights.

The result was what we have seen—a series of associations having for their primary object the removal of evil counsellors, as they were called, from the person of the prince, but gradually invading the legitimate rights of the crown, and terminating in the dethronement and assassination of the sovereign. For the part which Isabella acted in this tragedy no apology can be framed. The apprehensions of danger to her life, under which she attempted to conceal her real purposes, were of too flimsy a texture to blind the most devoted of her partisans; nor could she palliate her adulterous connection with Mortimer by retorting on her husband the charge of conjugal infidelity. In a few years her crime was punished with the general execration of mankind. She saw her paramour expire on a gibbet, and spent the remainder of her life in disgrace and obscurity.

[1] "The mystery surrounding Edward's tragic end," says Mackinnon,[o] "gave rise to a curious but incredible story of his changing his clothes with his servant, of his escape to Ireland and retirement to Lombardy where he lived several years as a hermit—all told with the circumstantial minuteness of a romancer to screen the culpable parties from the guilt of a horrible outrage, or whitewash their odious memory."

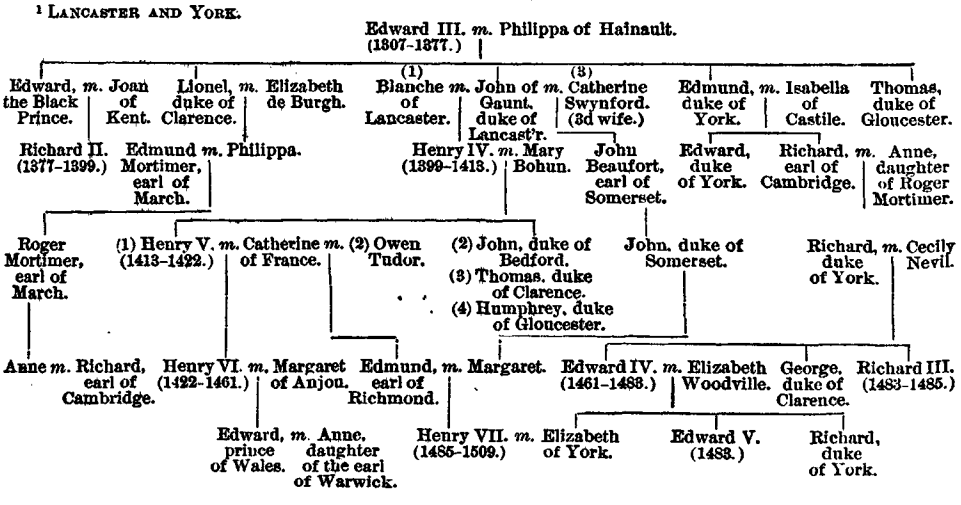
EDWARD III,[1] AND THE SCOTCH WAR

For some years, however, Isabella and Mortimer enjoyed the reward of their guilt. The youth of the king allowed them to retain that ascendancy over his mind which they had hitherto exercised; and the murder of his father secured them from the resentment of an injured husband. Of the forfeited estates of the Despensers and their partisans, the larger portion, with the title of Earl of March, fell to the lot of Mortimer; whilst the queen obtained the sum of £20,000 for the present payment of her debts, and a yearly income to the same amount for her future expenses.

In the parliament an act of indemnity was passed for all violences committed during the revolution; the award against the Despensers was re-enacted; the judgments given against the late earl of Lancaster and his adherents were reversed; both the Great Charter and the charter of forests were confirmed, and certain grievances abolished; and a council of regency was appointed, to consist of four bishops, four earls, and six barons. Most, however, of its members belonged to the queen's party, and those who were not under her control were gradually dismissed by the contrivance of that unprincipled woman and her paramour.

The first measures of the new government were disconcerted by an unexpected occurrence. Since the truce with Scotland only a few years had expired; but the state of affairs in England offered to the Scottish king a temptation which he had not the virtue to resist. He determined, in violation of his engagements, to wrest, if possible, from the young king a solemn renunciation of that superiority which had been claimed by his father and grandfather. Aware of the intentions of Bruce, the English government had recourse to every expedient to avert hostilities. The lords of the marches were ordered to observe the articles of the late treaty; it was solemnly confirmed by the new king; envoys were sent to negotiate with the Scottish monarch; and it was at last agreed that ambassadors should meet in the marches, and treat of a final peace. But Bruce summoned his military retainers to join him at the same place and on the same day; and Edward, to be prepared for the event, was compelled to issue similar orders to the tenants

[1] LANCASTER AND YORK.


Edward III. m. Philippa of Hainault. (1307–1377.)
Edward, the Black Prince.
m. Joan of Kent.
Lionel, duke of Clarence.
m. Elizabeth de Burgh.
(1) Blanche of Lancaster.
m. John of Gaunt, duke of Lancast'r.
(3) m. Catherine Swynford. (3d wife.)
Edmund, duke of York.
m. Isabella of Castile.
Thomas, duke of Gloucester.
Richard II. (1377–1399.)
Edmund Mortimer, earl of March.
m. Philippa.
Henry IV. (1399–1413.)
m. Mary Bohun.
John Beaufort, earl of Somerset.
Edward, duke of York.
Richard, earl of Cambridge.
m. Anne, daughter of Roger Mortimer.
Roger Mortimer, earl of March.
(1) Henry V. (1413–1422.)
m. Catherine of France.
m. (2) Owen Tudor.
(2) John, duke of Bedford.
(3) Thomas, duke of Clarence.
(4) Humphrey, duke of Gloucester.
John, duke of Somerset.
Richard, duke of York.
m. Cecily Nevil.
Anne
m. Richard, earl of Cambridge.
Henry VI. (1422–1461.)
m. Margaret of Anjou.
Edmund, earl of Richmond.
m. Margaret.
Edward IV. (1461–1483.)
m. Elizabeth Woodville.
George, duke of Clarence.
Richard III. (1483–1485.)
Edward, prince of Wales.
m. Anne, daughter of the earl of Warwick.
Henry VII. (1485–1509.)
m. Elizabeth of York.
Edward V. (1483.)
Richard, duke of York.

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of the crown and the men of the northern counties. The negotiators met: the Scots insisted on their own terms; and when the English demurred, an army of twenty-four thousand men under Randolph and Douglas crossed the borders, and ravaged the county of Cumberland.

Edward consumed six weeks at York, waiting for the arrival of his forces. At the suggestion of Mortimer, he had purchased, for the sum of £14,000, the services of John of Hainault and a body of foreigners, who were lodged in the best quarters and treated with the best cheer. On Trinity Sunday the king entertained five hundred knights, the queen sixty ladies, at their respective tables; but the festivity was interrupted by an alarm of a tumult in the city. The insolence of the foreigners had irritated the Lincolnshire archers; and in a battle, which lasted till night, some hundreds were slain on each side. The men of Hainault claimed the victory; but they were compelled from that moment to use the same precautions as in a hostile country, and never considered themselves safe till they had left the island. Commissioners were appointed to inquire into the origin of the quarrel; whatever may have been the result, it was deemed prudent to suppress it.[d]

EDWARD III

In the pages of Froissart,[f] we find a vivid description, "how the king of England made his first journey against the Scots." Having marched to Durham, he followed the course of the invaders by the smoke of the desolating fires which had marked their progress. Still the Scots wasted the country around; and the large English army, encumbered with a vast camp-equipage, and marching "through marishes and savage deserts, mountains and dales," followed them in vain for two days. It was then determined to leave behind them the baggage and stores of provisions, each horseman carrying a single loaf; and on the third day they crossed the Tyne. Here, suffering great privations, the English host remained seven days, looking in vain for their enemy, whom they expected to cross by the same ford. At length Edward proclaimed a great reward for the man who would discover to him where he would find the Scots; and Thomas de Rokeby led him back by a march of three days to the Wear, where they were encamped in huts, on a neighbouring hill. The two armies were ranged in order of battle; and "then some of the lords of England brought their young king on horseback, before all the battalions of the host, to give thereby the more courage to all his people." But the river was between the armies, and the hill was inaccessible. Heralds summoned the Scots to come into the plain and fight; but the Scots answered, "Here we shall abide, as long as it shall please us."

For three days the armies remained in this position; but on the fourth morning, when the English looked upon the mountain, the enemy was no more seen. Edward followed, and found them in a still more formidable position, and for eighteen days "they lodged each against other." But on

the first night two hundred Scots broke into the English camp, with the cry of "Douglas! Douglas! Ye shall die, thieves of England," and they nearly captured the young king sleeping, cutting asunder the cords of his tent. At last, the Scots again silently retreated by a night-march, and the English, giving up the pursuit in despair, returned to Durham, and thence to York. This was the first lesson in warfare of the great Edward. The youth was out-generalled; and it is recorded that he wept, when he was finally circumvented by the skill of an enemy so inferior in numbers.

In the ensuing spring of 1328, a peace was concluded with Scotland, by which the independence of that country, under King Robert Bruce, was fully recognised, the claim of feudal superiority being wholly renounced. It was also agreed that the Scotch regalia, as well as the "stone of destiny," should be restored. Thirty thousand marks were paid by Scotland, in compensation for the damages caused by the invasion of the previous year. Further, the sister of Edward was contracted in marriage with David, the son of Robert Bruce, who became king, upon the death of his heroic father, in 1328.

THE FALL OF MORTIMER

The treaty with Scotland was unpopular in England; and the Londoners resisted the removal of the famous coronation stone. The ex-queen Isabella and Mortimer, earl of March, were from this, and other causes, becoming odious. The young king was not considered responsible for this wise but unpopular settlement of the ancient dispute as to Scotland being a fief of the English crown. In 1328, a few months after his return from his northern campaign, Edward was married to Philippa, daughter of the count of Hainault, to whom he had been contracted by his mother. He was advancing to manhood, and had shown his courage and activity in his march to the Tyne. But Mortimer and Isabella were still the ruling powers in the state. Dangers were gathering around them; and they put on a bold front to their enemies. A confederacy against them was formed between the earl of Lancaster, nominally the head of the regency, and the late king's brothers, Kent and Norfolk. These princes were irresolute, and Lancaster was visited by a heavy fine. The earl of Kent, a weak young man, was persuaded by the spies and agents of Mortimer that Edward II was still alive; and he was imposed upon to the extent of addressing a letter to the deposed king, under the belief that he was in captivity. The letter was conveyed to Isabella and Mortimer, who summoned a pretended parliament, composed of their partisans, which adjudged the unfortunate victim to die as a traitor; and he was accordingly beheaded on the 19th of March, 1330.

A little after this, Queen Philippa gave birth to a son, Edward, so renowned in coming years as the Black Prince. It was time that the king should assert his own authority against his mother and her favourite. He confided his purpose to the earl of Montacute. A parliament was to assemble at Nottingham; and the ex-queen took up her residence in the castle, with Edward and Mortimer. The castle was filled with guards; and the keys of its gates were taken every night to the private chamber of Isabella. But there was a subterraneous passage, leading from the west side of the sandstone rock on which the castle stands, the entrance to which from the road is still known as Mortimer's hole. This communication was made known to Edward and Montacute by the governor. In the silent midnight hour of the 10th of October, Montacute entered, with sufficient force, and being

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joined by the young king, they proceeded to the rooms of the principal tower, and having seized the object of their search, by forcing his chamber-door and slaying those knights who defended the entrance, they carried him off in spite of Isabella's cries of "Spare my gentle Mortimer." The next morning the king issued a proclamation, in which he announced that the affairs of the kingdom had been evil-managed, to the dishonour of the realm, and to the impoverishment of the people; that he had caused the earl of March, and others, to be arrested, as the principal movers of these ills; and that all men should know that for the future he would himself govern his people by right and reason, as became his own dignity, and with the advice of the common council of the realm. On the 26th of November, Mortimer was condemned as a traitor, by a parliament at Westminster. The charges against him were, that he had fomented the dissensions between the late king and his queen; that he had illegally assumed the power vested in the council of regency; that he had caused Edward II to be put to death; that he had compelled the earl of Lancaster and others to pay excessive fines; and had instigated the plot against the earl of Kent. He was executed on the 29th of November, with four others, as his accomplices. The pope wrote to Edward not to expose the shame of his mother; and she, therefore, passed the rest of her life, twenty-eight years, in confinement at her manor of Risings.

THE RESULTS OF MISRULE; THE NEW EPOCH

We at length may quit this ghastly region of crime and retribution. In the annals of England there is no era of twenty years so full of revolution and counter-revolution; of imbecile authority struggling with lawless force; of bitter hatreds and outraged affections; of proscriptions and executions and secret murders. Such a system of misrule, approaching at times to a state of anarchy, must of necessity have been accompanied by widespread corruption and general misery. There is a contemporary English poem, *On the evil Times of Edward II*, which describes briefly, but emphatically, some of the class-iniquities and national calamities of the days of Gaveston and the Despensers. According to this picture of manners, the fiend showed his mastery, and raised such a strife, "that every lording was busy his own life to save; each was provoked to murder the other, and would spare none for kindred. While these great lordings were hurled on a heap, the prelates of holy church were blinded with covetousness. And then came a murrain of the cattle, and a dearth of corn, and poor simple men were a-hungred." This quaint old rhymer speaks as a bitter satirist; but with a circumstantial precision which shows that he wrote from his own observation. "Simony and covetise have the world at their will. Abbots and priors ride with horses and hounds as if they were knights, while poor men cower at the abbey-gate all day in hunger and in cold." As he satirises the church, so is he equally severe upon baron and knight. He accuses them even of cowardice; "they are lions in hall, and hares in the field. Knightship is debased and lame of foot. There is a new cut of squierie in every town—gentle men that should be, that are swollen with pride, and have cast nurture into the ditch. Justices, sheriffs, mayors, and bailiffs—they know how to make the dark night out of the fair day. If the king raises a taxation, it is so twitted away that half is stolen ere it is accounted for—there are so many partners. The rich are spared, and the poor are robbed. Every man is ready to fill his own purse, and the king has the least part, and he hath all the curse. The pleader

at the bar takes forty pence to speak a word or two for no good; and the false attorneys make men begin a suit they never would have thought of, and they get their silver for nought. The assizers condemn men for money, and the rich justice will do wrong for a bribe. Traffic was once maintained with truth, but now is all turned to treachery." So, concludes the satirist, is all the world blinded. We give a specimen of this curious production of the English language of the fourteenth century:

> Pride hath in his paunter kauht the heie and the lowe,
> So that unnethe can eny man God Almihti knowe.
> Pride priketh aboute, wid nithe and wid onde;
> Pes and love and charité hien hem out of londe
> so faste,
> That God wole for-don the world we muwe be sore agaste.

Exaggerated as this picture of society may be, there can be little doubt that, in the transition state from the feudal relations between lord and villein, to a condition in which the commons had attained a certain amount of independence, there had arisen a general desire amongst the governing classes, ecclesiastical, military, and civil, to substitute cunning for force and extortion for open plunder; that the larger cultivators and the traders, aspiring, as they do in all times, to the luxuries of those in higher stations, ground those beneath them with slight regard to justice. The church had lost its ancient character of the protector of the poor; and the vices and oppressions of the monks had brought religion into contempt. Amidst all this, there was a great stirring of the national intellect. The wars of the crown were now supported by taxation of the people generally, instead of being conducted under the old tenure of knight-service. When the merchant or the yeoman had to draw his purse-strings, he became critical as to the mode in which he was governed. There was small communication between one district of the country and another; and thus, what we call public opinion could only be imperfectly formed. But in market and fair, in the guild and at the assize, men conferred and disputed; and whatever oppressions they endured were referred to the king's evil advisers. Thus there was exultation in the land when Gaveston, Despenser, and Mortimer fell, one after the other; and their deaths were considered a just punishment for the wrongs of the commons. In that class of the commons were not included the great body of the labourers. They made themselves heard at a more distant period.

Meanwhile, a new epoch had opened. A young king had ascended the throne, full of martial ardour, ambitious, graced with all chivalric accomplishments, and gifted with many of the qualities of a sagacious ruler. His wars, however, founded on very doubtful pretensions, which appear to us of the present time manifestly unjust, were so brilliant in their success that, in the pride of a nation that was now thoroughly English, the evils of administration, and especially the wrongs of the peasantry, were too often forgotten. Now and then a stand was made for liberty, and some just laws were enacted. But the military spirit was the pervading influence of the reign of Edward III; and the encouragement of that national temper kept his throne secure. During this reign, chivalry put on its most attractive features of courage and courtesy; and those knightly qualities were never set forth more seductively than by the chronicler of chivalry, Sir John Froissart. The savage disregard of life—the massacres and plunderings that lie beneath this surface of romance—will display themselves as we proceed in our narrative. The condi-

tion of the general body of the people, such as it is described in the poem *On the evil Times of Edward II*, is not so apparent in the usual historical relations.

Whatever might have been the ferocity and cruelty of the days of chivalry, whose most golden period belongs to the reign of Edward III, we may well believe that the spirit which it engendered had considerable influence in forming the character of what was now the English nation. Froissart[j] delights in setting forth the peaceful graces of the regal and noble life—the minstrelsy and tales of glee, the dances and the carols. He goes forth to the chase with hawks and hounds. He sees the fairest maiden bestow the silken scarf upon the victor in the tournament. He hears without any shudder the cries of the herald, "The love of ladies"—"Glory won by blood." He sees not the bleeding horse and the gasping knight. There are death-wounds in the *mêlée*; but the wine-flask is in the lighted hall. In the same spirit does he describe the course of warfare—the brilliant charge of the cavalry, the unbroken ranks of the footmen, the fatal aim of the archers, the solemn confession before battle, the elation of heart at the cry of "advance banners," the knighting in the field. The horrors are passed over in a few brief sentences, containing the emphatic words "burned"—"robbed"—"wasted"—"pillaged"—"slain"—"beheaded." And yet out of all this was engendered a better state of society, which could never have grown amongst an unchivalrous aristocracy and an unwarlike yeomanry. Out of the Norman oppressors and the Saxon serfs had arisen a great race, whose blood, having mingled with that of the first Britons and their Roman masters, had at length produced one nation "inferior to none existing in the world," says Macaulay:[k] "Every yeoman from Kent to Northumberland valued himself as one of a race born for victory and dominion, and looked down with scorn upon a nation before which his ancestors had trembled."

This was the spirit which made Crécy, the first great popular remembrance, long cherished with a defying pride; but which had a positive effect for instant good upon the Englishmen who fought by the side of Edward and his son, as well as upon all who heard of their countrymen's daring and steadiness. Politically, the French war was unjust. Morally, it elevated the whole people. The same spirit which won the great battles of the Somme and the Loire had to win many a constitutional fight against the attempted encroachments upon liberty of the powerful monarch who led the English lords and yeomen to victory. As the whole nation rose in military prowess—as the archer in his buff jacket became as important as the knight in his steel hauberk—the physical hardihood and the intellectual vigour of the people were more and more developed. The burgher became more resolved to maintain his free charters with his own right arm; and the noble found that his own security was mixed up with the liberty and happiness of the commons; and he joined with them in making redress of grievances go hand in hand with the grant of supplies. Then, too, men began to think. Miracles ceased in the presence of holy relics, and dispensations for sin came to be despised. The preaching of Wycliffe found willing hearers. The tales of Chaucer were read in the baronial hall and in the student's chamber. The universities were filled with scholars. The laws were administered in the language of the nation. The Anglo-Norman had given place to that noble tongue upon which our literature has been built. Five centuries ago, the course upon which the English people had to run their race was straight before them; and however they have been assailed by tyranny, or however corrupted by prosperity, they are still marching forward on the same vantage ground.

Edward was twenty years of age in 1332. His great talents, his resolved character, and his towering ambition were rapidly developing themselves. In him, the martial spirit of his grandfather had revived with a loftier and more chivalrous generosity. His public actions were less regulated by his own arbitrary will than those of the first Edward; and he had a more extended range of opinion to propitiate than that of a feudal aristocracy. His wars were essentially popular. When, in 1346, he resolved upon the invasion of France, he published a manifesto upon the cause of the war, which he addressed to the provincial of the order of Preaching Friars in England, in which he exhorts him to urge his brethren to set forth this cause to their congregations in their sermons. This shows that the great king did not manifest that indifference to the sentiments of his people, which the mere despot, and the agents of despotism, think themselves privileged to assume. His wars involved heavy charges upon the industry of the nation; but they were nevertheless invariably considered as national undertakings. If these undertakings had been regarded upon strictly reasonable principles by king and people, the young heir of Robert Bruce would not have been disturbed in his succession to the throne of Scotland, nor the right of Philip of Valois to be king of France disputed. The Scottish wars, whatever form they might assume, were unavoidable, as long as two military nations, undivided by seas or mountains, had aggressions to carry forward and injuries to revenge. The gradual interfusion of races and interests could be the only pacificator. The French wars, prolonged as they were for a hundred and twenty years, had a natural termination, when the plans of continental dominion were found to be utterly incompatible with the prosperity of this island realm. The importance of the Scottish wars passed away, for the most part, when Bruce had fought his great fight for independence. The French wars involve so many passages of the most vivid historical interest, present so many remarkable points of comparison between the two nations, and have had such an enduring effect upon the policy of both governments that these events will require to be related with occasional detail till the extinction of the English power in France was happily accomplished.

EDWARD BALIOL

The attempt of Edward Baliol to recover the crown of Scotland during the minority of the young king, David, arose out of the discontent of some English lords who claimed lands in that country. The king of England is supposed, with good reason, to have encouraged the attempt; but the passage of armed men through the northern counties was strictly forbidden: and Baliol sailed with his associates from the Humber, and landed in Fife in August, 1332. His success was marvellous. On the 27th of September he was crowned at Scone. But his reverse of fortune was equally rapid. On the 16th of December he was surprised at Annan, and fled to the marches. During his brief tenure of power, Baliol had acknowledged that the crown of Scotland was a fief held under the crown of England; and Edward had concluded with him a treaty of alliance. Early in 1333, the Scots, under the leaders who acted in the name of King David, invaded England; Baliol commenced the siege of Berwick; and the English king came in May to his aid.

On the 19th of July was fought the great battle of Halidon Hill, in which Edward was completely victorious. Here, amidst a fearful slaughter of his countrymen, fell the regent Douglas, and many earls and barons. Berwick

was surrendered to the English, and Baliol was again seated on his uneasy throne. Then, at a parliament held at Edinburgh, a large portion of the south of Scotland was annexed to England. This impolitic dismemberment of the kingdom was an outrage upon the national feeling, and Baliol was again driven forth in 1334. Again, in 1335, Scotland was ravaged by the English forces, in concert with Baliol; and for several years a struggle was carried on, with varied success. But Edward had other objects presented to his ambition. The king of France had espoused the cause of the Scottish nation against Baliol and his powerful supporter; and Edward had now an ostensible motive for commencing a great war, for the purpose of asserting his pretensions to the crown of France. In a few years the adherents of David were the winners of fortress after fortress; and the son of Bruce, in 1341, returned to his kingdom.

THE FRENCH SUCCESSION

In the manifesto of the 15th of March, 1346, addressed to the provincial of the Preaching Friars, King Edward states that upon the death of his uncle, Charles, king of France, he being in his minority, by the advice of his lords spiritual and temporal, and of his most skilled councillors, sent ambassadors into France to demand the crown; and that they were compelled to return, their lives having been threatened by Philip, who had usurped the royal authority. Charles IV, called the Fair, died early in 1328, leaving no male issue. But a posthumous daughter was born five months after his death. In the interval, Philip of Valois, who was cousin to the deceased king, had been appointed regent. Some French authorities state that Edward demanded the regency, but that Philip was appointed by the peers of France. But there can be no doubt that Edward put forward his pretensions in the way which he stated in his manifesto of 1346. In 1329, however, he went to France, and did homage for his lands there to his rival Philip. He was then only seventeen years of age, and was under the tutelage of Mortimer and his mother. But in 1337, after the king of France had taken part in the Scottish war, Edward boldly assumed the title of King of France, and prepared to enforce his claim at the sword's point. His claim rested upon these grounds:

What is called the Salic law, by which females in France are excluded from succession to the throne, was an unwritten law; and was not even a well-defined and fixed principle in all its bearings. Although it set aside the female herself, Edward contended that it did not set aside the male heir of such female. His mother, Isabella, was sister to three successive kings; and though excluded from the throne herself might transmit a title to her son. He was the nearest male heir through his mother. Philip of Valois, although the affinity was through his father, was not so near akin as Edward by one degree. The civilians were greatly divided upon the question, and Edward had, no doubt, abundant counsel to bring his demands to the arbitrament of warfare. In all his proceedings he seems to have conducted this great contest as if it were a wager of battle, in which heaven would decide the right by the issue. The waste of life, the destruction of property, never disturbed the course of feudal policy. And yet, in 1340, Edward, addressing Philip of Valois, demanded what he called his rightful inheritance; and added, "to prevent the mortality amongst Christians, since the quarrel apparently belongs to you and me, we are desirous that the controversy between us may be decided by our own persons, body to body; and in case you shall not vouchsafe this way, that then the dispute may be ended by the battle of one hundred of the

most efficient persons of your party, and as many of my liege subjects." The king of France replied that he had seen the letters addressed to one Philip of Valois, but as they did not come to him he should return no answer, but as soon as he should think fit would drive out of his kingdom those who had presumed to enter it in arms. Edward had invaded France from Flanders in 1339, but upon this occasion he returned to England without striking any important blow. He had depended upon foreign alliances, which had failed him in the hour of need.

In 1340, Edward, who had gone over to England, leaving the queen at Ghent, was informed that Philip had collected a large fleet in the harbour of Sluys, at the mouth of the Schelde.[b] The king immediately collected every vessel in the southern ports, and declared his intention to seek and fight the enemy. The opposition and entreaties of his council were despised. "You are all," he exclaimed, "in a conspiracy against me. I shall go: those who are afraid may stay at home." He sailed with a gallant fleet from Orwell, and the next evening, off Blankenberghe, discovered across a neck of land the forest of masts which occupied the harbour. Three knights were landed, who reported at their return that they had reckoned nineteen sail of unusual dimensions, two hundred ships of war, and a still greater number of smaller vessels.

During the night the enemy moved from their anchorage, and at sunrise were discovered in four lines moored across the passage. Their ships carried turrets provided with stones on their mast-heads, and were fastened to each other with chains of iron. Edward placed the strongest of his ships in front, so that every vessel carrying a body of men-at-arms was accompanied by two sail manned with archers. At first, the king put out to sea; a movement which impressed the enemy with a notion that he declined an engagement; but his object was to avoid the sun, which shone full in his eyes; and soon afterwards, having the wind and tide in his favour, he bore down on the first line of the French. Each commander selected his opponent, and met with a gallant resistance: but the discharge of the archers gradually cleared the decks of the enemy; the men-at-arms immediately boarded; every ship in the first division was captured; and the banner of England waved triumphantly over the colours of France.

At this important moment arrived Lord Morley with a fleet from the northern counties; and the victors with their friends proceeded to attack the three remaining divisions. But a panic struck the second and third lines of the enemy; the men leaped from their ships, which they could not disengage, into their boats; and more than two thousand are said to have perished in the waves. The fourth line remained, consisting of sixty large vessels, reinforced by the bravest of those who had escaped from the captured ships. This, though the victory was already won, opposed an obstinate resistance to the conquerors; and by prolonging the contest till midnight afforded to a few stragglers the opportunity of escaping in the dark. With the exception of these, the whole fleet remained in the hands of the English. Edward is said to have lost two ships, which were sunk, and about four thousand men; the slain and drowned of the enemy amounted, according to report, to seven times that number.[d]

The victory was so complete that the French courtiers did not dare to apprise Philip of the event which had transferred his entire fleet to his enemy. His buffoon was instructed to hint to him the issue of his great preparations to stop the passage of Edward into Flanders. "The English," said the clever jester, "are rank cowards, for they had not the courage to jump overboard

as your majesty's French and Normans did." The naval victory of Sluys was followed by the siege of Tournay. It was at this period that Edward challenged Philip to single combat. But that year a truce between France and England was concluded which lasted till 1342. In 1343 negotiations for peace were carried on before the pope at Avignon, without any result. In 1344 the war was recommenced.[b]

It was after the disastrous failure of the siege of Tournay that Edward had a serious quarrel with his chief ministers. Suddenly, without any previous warning, he crossed from Zealand to England and dismissed the chancellor, treasurer, and master of rolls, and ordered the arrest of three of the judges and many of the revenue collectors. Then he ordered John Stratford, archbishop of Canterbury and president of the council, to answer before the court of exchequer to the charge of wasting royal money. The archbishop appealed to Magna Charta, and refused to appear before any other judges than his peers. At the next meeting of parliament the lords upheld his contention and insisted on their privileges. Edward, although protesting that such action meant a weakening of his prerogative, was finally forced to drop the proceedings against Stratford.[a]

THE FLEMISH ALLIANCE

The character of Edward III was produced by a combination of the qualities of the knight and the politician. He was ready to take the foremost place in the battle-field; to run great hazards in his own person; to surround himself with all the pomp of chivalry, and to display its occasional courtesy and munificence. But he clearly understood the position of England with relation to the other European states; and he was not insensible to the advantages he possessed in the superior condition of his own people, and, what was of more importance, in their free spirit as compared with the French. France, England, and Flanders had many points of resemblance, and were drawn closer together than any other European nations. But they had also essential points of difference. The nobles of France did not form a strong collective body like those of England. The people had not been blended with the aristocracy in the common assertion of their liberties. True freedom—that which has been won, and can be maintained—was unknown to France. There were no institutions which could be considered established or sound. There were continual changes of principles of government; no recognised rights, amidst alternations of sudden liberty and absolute power. Thus, there was no great popular class upon whom the king and the nobility could rely, and at whose head they could confidently march to victory.

On the other hand, Flanders was essentially democratic. The burghers had accumulated riches far above those of the rest of Europe; and their corporations of trades in Ghent, Bruges, and other cities had established a power before which their sovereign counts trembled and their nobles scarcely exhibited their authority. The great enemy of their liberties was the king of France. He had defeated the revolted burghers at Cassel, in the first year of his reign; and the Flemings, now under their great leader, Jacob van Artevelde, were prepared for the strictest alliance with England. This extraordinary man, commonly known as the "brewer of Ghent," was a noble, allied to the first families in Flanders. He was a "brewer," as a prince in England is often a "fishmonger." He was a member of the guild of brewers. Edward knew the value of this alliance with the Flemings and their demo-

cratic leader. Their friendship was founded upon something higher than the patronage of the king or the servility of the tribune of the people. Queen Philippa held the brewer's infant son, the famous Philip, at the baptismal font; and Artevelde thought to find a powerful protector for his Flemings against the tyranny of their native rulers, and the jealousy which France felt of a dangerous neighbour, by recommending that the burghers should depose Louis, count of Flanders, and call Edward, prince of Wales, to the government. Bruges and Ypres supported the proposition. The populace of Ghent suddenly turned against the man under whose authority they had arrived, in common with the other towns, at an unequalled height of prosperity—an authority far more potent than that of their sovereign count, who had removed himself for safety to France. They murdered Artevelde. At his instigation Edward had assumed the title of King of France. When the king heard of his friend's death, he put to sea in great anger and returned to England. A deputation from all the trading towns, except Ghent, appeased his wrath, and the alliance was continued. "So, little by little," says Froissart,*f* "the death of Jacob van Artevelde was forgotten."

This event happened in July, 1345. The commercial intercourse between England and Flanders was, at this time, of the greatest importance to both countries. France had scarcely any internal trade, and less foreign commercial intercourse. With Bruges on the north and Bordeaux on the south, the traffic of London and Bristol and the Cinque Ports had become very large. The parliament of England willingly voted large sums for the war with France. While Edward was negotiating with Artevelde, the earl of Derby was winning battles in Gascony. English armies had also previously found an entrance to France through Brittany, in consequence of a disputed succession to the duchy. Edward supported the claim of John de Montfort against that of Charles of Blois, nephew of the French king. The defence of the castle of Hennebon by Joan de Montfort, during the captivity of her husband, is one of the most interesting episodes of the wars in which England was engaged. The historian and the artist have delighted to exhibit the heroic duchess, as described by Froissart*f* with "the courage of a man, and the heart of a lion," showing to the people of Rennes her infant boy, and saying, "See here my little son, who shall be the restorer of his father." They have painted her, after the old chronicler, besieged in Hennebon, and at the last extremity looking down along the sea, out of a window in the castle, and crying aloud, smiling for great joy, "I see the succours of England coming." Sir Walter Manny was her deliverer; and the road to France was open through Brittany.

All these attacks upon the French kingdom, conducted with various fortune by England, from 1338 to 1345, were but preludes to the great attempt of 1346, when Edward, relying less upon Gascon or Fleming than upon his English yeomen, landed near Cape la Hogue, on the coast of Normandy. He had with his army his own first-born son, now sixteen years of age. He had earls of famous name, barons and knights. But his "four thousand men of arms, and ten thousand archers, besides Irishmen and Welshmen that followed the host on foot," were his main strength. They were the despised "fantassins" of the mounted warriors. They belonged to a novel system of tactics, which the French historian, Michelet, says "arose out of a new state of society"; and the deeds which they did "revealed a secret which nobody suspected—that of the real want of military power of the feudal world, which was believed to be the only military world." The French nobles, themselves full of courage and contempt of death, despised the infantry and archers taken from the common people. The English earls and knights led them on

[1346 A.D.]

foot to victory. The French leaders were afraid of trusting the people with the mighty bow. The English twice conquered France with a handful of yeomen. This is the feeling with which Barante, a Frenchman, speaks of Crécy and Agincourt—and he is right.

EDWARD'S NORMAN CAMPAIGN

Edward III assumed the title of king of France in 1337, and in 1340 he quartered the arms of France with those of England. Upon his coins he was king of England and France. In that year a statute was passed which shows how completely the feeling of nationality had now possessed the race of Englishmen, and how jealous they were of the independence of their island. "Know ye," says Edward, "that whereas some people do think that by reason that the realm of France is devolved to us as right heir of the same, and forasmuch as we be king of France, our realm of England should be put in subjection of the king and of the realm of France in time to come. We will, and grant, and stablish, that our said realm of England, nor the people of the same, of what estate or condition they be, shall not in any time to come be put in subjection nor in obeisance of us, nor of our heirs and successors, as kings of France." All the supposed pre-eminence of the French race over the English had been obliterated in the amalgamation of three centuries. In 1362, it was enacted that all pleas in the courts "shall be pleaded, showed, defended, answered, debated, and judged in the English tongue," and not in the French tongue, "which is much unknown in the said realm."

The English people, speaking the English tongue, had become inspired with the passion for continental dominion. Under the Norman kings and the Norman barons they had been made to feel the yoke of the conquerors. They would now go forth themselves to conquest. There was a great issue to be tried, in a daring adventure for the possession of the noble land that their king demanded as his own. Edward was called by his rival Philip "the wool-merchant." The growers of wool, the dealers of the staple, would go forth with bow and bill to encounter, at any odds, the chivalry of France. On the 10th of July, 1346, ten thousand archers of England were lodged on the sands near Cape La Hogue. As if the circumstances of the Norman conquest were to be parodied, Froissart says, "The king issued out of his ship, and the first foot that he set on the ground, he fell so rudely that the blood burst out of his nose. The knights that were about him took him up and said, 'Sir, for God's sake, enter again into your ship, and come not a land this day, for this is but an evil sign for us.' Then the king answered quickly, and said, 'Wherefore? This is a good token for me, for the land desireth to have me,' of the which answer all his men were right joyful."

The march of the invading army was in perfect conformity with the usual mode of making war in the feudal times. To desolate the country, to burn the towns if they resisted, to plunder the inhabitants even when they peacefully submitted—these were the aspects in which King Edward and his English presented themselves to the people over whom he claimed to rule. Keeping near the coast, they arrived at Barfleur, which was given up "for fear of death"; gold and silver and jewels were found, and "so much riches that the boys and villeins of the host set nothing by good furred gowns." On they marched to Cherbourg, "a great and rich town, but into the castle they could not come, it was so strong." From Cherbourg they proceeded to Carentan, where the castle was taken by assault. During this progress along the sands

and marshes of the coast, the fleet kept in view; and the captured burgesses that were worth ransom were sent on board. In this manner the army reached Caen. They entered the city, but the people cast down stones and timber and iron upon the English who had entered their streets, and killed and wounded five hundred of them.

Edward was now fully committed to the dangers of his adventure; for he sent his ships home, laden with plunder and prisoners. From Caen, he rode in the same order as before, "brenning and exiling the country," till he reached Évreux; and thence marched to Louviers. His object was to cross the Seine at Rouen, and then march to Calais, expecting to be joined by an army of Flemings. But Philip was at Rouen before him, and was encamped on the right bank of the river, having destroyed the bridge of boats. Below Rouen the passage of the Seine was too difficult to be attempted; and the English army was therefore led along the left bank, by Vernon and Mantes, to Poissy—a march of more than sixty miles. The bridge here was partially destroyed. The position of the English was now one of extreme peril. They were separated by two great rivers, the Seine and the Somme, from their Flemish auxiliaries; and Philip was collecting a great force as he proceeded towards Paris in a parallel march on the right bank of the Seine. There was no course but that of fronting the danger. Part of Edward's host marched on to St. Germain, and even to Neuilly. King Philip caused all the penthouses of the city to be pulled down, and took up a position at St. Denis.

Meanwhile, the English had repaired the bridge of Poissy, the broken arches and joists of which lay in the river; and Edward rested in the nunnery at Poissy. He then crossed the bridge at Poissy; while Philip, at St. Denis, was preparing to resist an attack upon Paris. The course of the English was now direct by Beauvais, on to the Somme, through Poix. But Philip had made a rapid march upon Amiens, detachments of his men-at-arms having preceded him along the right bank of the Somme, guarding every ford and breaking down every bridge. The main body of his army was gradually shutting up the invaders in the nook between the Somme and the sea. Edward had reached Airaines; and he had sent out his marshals with three thousand archers and men-at-arms to find some passage. At Picquigny they were boldly met, and again at Pont de Remy, and could accomplish nothing. They returned to Airaines and made their report, and "the king of England was right pensive." The English marched out of Airaines in the morning, and the French entered the town at noon.

In haste the English had departed from Airaines. When the French marched in, the meat was on the spits, the bread was in the oven, the tables were spread for dinner, the wine-tuns were at hand. There was no time for feasting. Rapidly they marched to Oisemont, where the king took up his quarters. The marshals had ridden to the gates of Abbeville and onward to St. Valery. The bridge of Abbeville was within the walls; the Somme widened and was more dangerous as it neared the sea. Prisoners of the country were brought in to Edward; and he "right courteously demanded of them if there were any amongst them that knew any passage beneath Abbeville." If any man would show such a passage, he and twenty of his company should be quit of his ransom. In the hour of his need, help came from one of those humble men that the tyrannous host had made war upon in their corn-fields and hovels. "A varlet, called Gobyn Agace, stepped forth and said to the king, 'Sir, I promise you on the jeopardy of my head I shall bring you to such a place.'" It was a passage a little above Abbeville, hard in the bottom with

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white stones, thence called Blanquetaque. Here the river was tidal; and Agace said that when the flood was gone the stream was so low that it might be passed without danger.

The king slept not much that night. At midnight his trumpet was sounded, and at daybreak of that morning of August the host had departed from Oisemont, led by Gobyn Agace to the much-desired ford. At the sun-rising they had reached it. But the flood was up; and they waited till the hour of prime—the first canonical hour of prayer—until the tide ebbed. But a great company of horse and foot, to the number of twelve thousand, had been gathered under the command of a Norman baron, Sir Godemar du Fay, on the right bank of the river. The French and English struggled in the ford; and the Genoese of Philip's army did great trouble with their crossbows; but the archers of Edward shot so wholly together that at length the way was cleared, and Sir Godemar du Fay was discomfited and fled. The king having crossed, he thanked God for his army's escape from their great peril; and dismissed Gobyn Agace with a present of a hundred nobles and a horse. The army then marched on, and lodged in the fields near Crécy. The king of France heard that the afternoon flood had come in at Blanquetaque; and so he rested that night at Abbeville.[b]

THE BATTLE OF CRÉCY (1346 A.D.)

Edward was now within a few days' march of the frontiers of Flanders, but nothing was seen or heard of his Flemish auxiliaries. He was probably tired of retreating, and encouraged by the result of the remarkable battle at Blanquetaque. When told that Philip would still pursue him, he said, "We will go no further." As he had not the eighth part of the number of men that Philip had, his marshals selected an advantageous position on an eminence a little behind the village of Crécy.[1] After supper he entered his oratory, and, falling on his knees, prayed God to bring him off with honour if he should fight on the morrow. Rising at early dawn, he and his son Edward heard mass and communicated; the greater part of his people confessed and put themselves in a comfortable state of mind. They had not been harassed for many hours; they had fared well: they had had a good night's rest, and were fresh and vigorous.

After mass the king ordered the men to arm and assemble, each under his proper banner. In the rear of his army he enclosed a large park near a wood, in which he placed all his baggage wagons and all his horses; for everyone, man-at-arms as well as archer, was to fight that day on foot. The first division was under the command of his young son, with whom were placed the earls of Warwick and Oxford, and other experienced captains; it consisted of about 800 men-at-arms, 2,000 archers, and 1,000 Welsh foot. A little behind them, and rather on their flank, stood the second division of 800 men-at-arms and 1,200 archers, who were commanded by the earls of Northampton and Arundel, the lords De Roos, Willoughby, and others. The third division stood in reserve on the top of the hill; it consisted of 700 men-at-arms and

[1] The hollow in which the battle was fought is called "*La valée des clares ou gentilshommes.*" The wood at the extreme right of the field, where 30,000 French were killed on the morning after the battle, is still called by the people "the forest bathed in blood." Towards the centre of the field is the spot where, according to Crécy tradition, the king of Bohemia is said to have fallen; his badge of three ostrich feathers and motto—"*Ich Dien*"—being said to have been taken from him and assumed by the Black Prince.

2,000 archers. The archers of each division formed in front, in the shape of a portcullis or harrow.

After his march and counter-march on the day of Blanquetaque, Philip rested at Abbeville, and he lost a whole day there, waiting for reinforcements, among which were one thousand lances of the count of Savoy. This morning, however, the French king marched to give battle, breathing fury and vengeance: his countenance was clouded—a savage silence could not conceal the agitation of his soul—all his movements were precipitate, without plan or concert. It seemed as if the shades of De Clisson and his murdered companions flitted before his eyes and obscured his vision. He ran rather than marched from Abbeville, and when he came in sight of the well-ordered divisions of Edward, his men were tired, and his rearguard far behind. By the advice of a Bohemian captain, he agreed to put off the battle till the morrow, and two officers immediately rode, one along the van and the other towards the rear, crying out, "Halt, banners, in the name of God and St. Denis!" Those that were in front stopped, but those behind rode on, saying that they would not halt until they were as forward as the first.

When the van felt the rear pressing on them they pushed forward, and neither the king nor the marshals could stop them, but on they marched without any order until they came near the English. Then the foremost ranks fell back at once in great disorder, which alarmed those in the rear, who thought there had been fighting. There was then room enough for those behind to pass in front had they been willing so to do: "some did so, and some remained very shy." All the roads between Abbeville and Crécy were covered with common people, who, while they were yet three leagues from their enemy, were bawling out, "Kill! kill!" "There is no man," says Froissart,[f] "unless he had been present, that can imagine or truly record the confusion of that day, especially the bad management and disorder of the French, whose troops were innumerable." The kings, dukes, counts, barons, and lords of France advanced each as he thought best. Philip was carried forward by the torrent, and as soon as he came in sight of the English, his blood began to boil, and he cried out, "Order the Genoese forward, and begin the battle, in the name of God and St. Denis!" These Genoese were famous cross-bowmen: according to Froissart, they were fifteen thousand strong. But they were quite fatigued, having that day marched six leagues on foot. They told the constable that they were not in a state to do any great exploit that day. The count d'Alençon, King Philip's brother, hearing this, said, "See what we get by employing such scoundrels, who fail us in our need." The susceptible Italians were not likely to forget these hasty and insulting words, but they formed and led the van. They were supported by the count d'Alençon, with a numerous cavalry.

While these things were passing, a heavy rain fell, accompanied by thunder: and there was a fearful eclipse of the sun. About five in the afternoon, the weather cleared up and the sun shone forth in full splendour. His rays darted full in the eyes of the French, but the English had the sun at their backs. When the Genoese had made their approach, they set up a terrible shout to strike terror into the English; but the English yeomen remained motionless, not seeming to care for it: they sent up a second shout, and advanced, but still the English moved not; they shouted a third time, and advancing a little began to discharge their crossbows. Then the English moved, but it was one step forward, and they shot their arrows with such rapidity and vigour that "it seemed as if it snowed." These well-shot arrows pierced shield and armour; the Genoese could not stand them. On seeing these auxiliaries waver and then fall back, the king of France cried out in a fury, "Kill me those

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scoundrels, for they stop our way without doing any good!" and at these words the French men-at-arms laid about them, killing and wounding the retreating Genoese. All this wonderfully increased the confusion; and still the English yeomen kept shooting as vigorously as before into the midst of the crowd: many of their arrows fell among Alençon's splendid cavalry, and killing and wounding many made them caper and fall among the Genoese, "so that they could never rally or get up again."

Having got free from the rabble-rout, Alençon and the count of Flanders skirted the English archers and fell upon the men-at-arms of the prince's battalia, where they fought fiercely for some time. The second division of the English moved to the support of the prince. The king of France was eager to support Alençon, but he could not penetrate a hedge of English archers which formed in his front. But without the king's forces Alençon, with whom fought French, Germans, Bohemians, and Savoyards, seemed to all eyes more than a match for the prince. At a moment when the conflict seemed doubtful, the earl of Warwick sent to request a reinforcement from the reserve. Edward, who had watched the battle from a windmill on the summit of the hill, and who did not put on his helmet the whole day, asked the knight whether his son was killed, or wounded, or thrown to the ground? The knight replied, "No, sire, please God, but he is hard beset." "Then," said the king, "return to those who sent you, and tell them that they shall have no help from me. Let the boy win his spurs; for I am resolved, if it please God, that this day be his, and that the honour of it be given all to him and to those to whose care I have intrusted him." When Sir Thomas Norwich reported this message, they were all greatly encouraged, and repented of having ever sent him. Soon after this, Alençon was killed, and his battalions were scattered.

The king of France made several brilliant charges, but he was repulsed each time with great loss: his horse was killed under him by an English arrow, and the best of his friends had fallen around him. Night now set in, but not before he had lost the battle. At the hour of vespers he had not more than sixty men about him of all sorts. John of Hainault now laid hold of his bridle-rein and led him away by force, for he had entreated him to retire before this, but in vain. The king rode away till he came to the castle of La Broye, where he found the gates shut, for it was dark night. He summoned the châtelain, who came upon the battlements and asked who called at such an hour. The king answered, "Open, open, châtelain, it is the fortune of France!" The governor knew the king's voice, descended, opened the gates, and let down the bridge. The king and his company entered the castle, but he had with him only five barons.

Such was the memorable battle of Crécy; it was fought on Saturday, the 26th day of August, 1346. On the Sunday morning a fog arose so that the English could scarcely see the length of half an acre before them. The king sent out a detachment of 500 lances and 2,000 archers to reconnoitre. This detachment soon found themselves in the midst of a body of militia from Beauvais and Rouen, who, wholly ignorant of what had happened, had marched all night to overtake the French army. These men took the English for French, and hastened to join them. Before they found out their mistake the English fell upon them and slew them without mercy. Soon after, the same party took a different road, and fell in with a fresh force, under the archbishop of Rouen and the grand prior of France, who were also ignorant of the defeat of the French; for they had heard that the king would not fight till the Sunday. Here began a fresh battle, for those two spiritual lords were well provided with stout men-at-arms. They could not, however, stand

against the English: the two lords were killed, and only a few of their men escaped by flight. In the course of the morning the English found many Frenchmen, who had lost their road the preceding evening. All these were put to the sword; and of foot soldiers sent from the municipalities, cities, and good towns of France, there were slain this Sunday morning more than four times as many as in the great battle of Saturday. When this destructive detachment returned to headquarters, King Edward sent to examine the dead, and learn what French lords had fallen. The lords Cobham and Stafford were charged with this duty, and they took with them three heralds to recognise the arms, and two secretaries to write down the names. They remained all that day in the fields, returning as the king was sitting down to supper, when they reported that they had found the bodies of eleven princes, eighty bannerets, twelve hundred knights, and about thirty thousand common men.*i*

Among the slain the most distinguished was John, king of Bohemia. Age had not chilled in him the fire of youth: though blind, he placed himself in the first division of the French; and as the issue grew dubious, ordered the four knights, his attendants, to lead him into the hottest of the battle, "that I too," said he, "may have a stroke at the English." Placing him in the midst of them, and interlacing their bridles, they spurred forward their horses, and were almost immediately slain. By the writers of the age his conduct has been extolled as an instance of unparalleled heroism. His motto, *Ich Dien* (I serve), was adopted by the prince of Wales, and has been always borne by his successors.

The conquerors beheld with astonishment the result of this bloody and decisive battle. They did not attribute it to their own courage or the imprudence of the enemy, but to the protection of the Almighty, who had thus pronounced judgment in favour of their sovereign; and the thanksgivings which were offered up in the camp were quickly repeated in every town and village in England.*d* On Monday morning the king of England marched off to the north, keeping near the coast, and passing through Montreuil-sur-Mer. On Thursday, the 31st of August, five days after the great battle of Crécy, he sat down before Calais and began his famous siege of that place—a siege, or rather a blockade, which lasted nearly a year, and was enlivened by many brilliant feats of arms. An immediate consequence of his victory at Crécy was the withdrawing of the duke of Normandy from Guienne, where the earl of Derby was almost reduced to extremities notwithstanding the gallant assistance of Sir Walter Manny, who had removed a small body from Brittany to Gascony.

THE BATTLE OF NEVILLE'S CROSS (1346 A.D.)

While Edward was occupied at Calais, Philip resorted to measures which he hoped would create such a confusion in England as to oblige his immediate return thither. Ever since his guest David Bruce had been reseated on the throne, he had kept up an active correspondence with Scotland. His communications were now more frequent, and, in the month of September, King David himself marched from Perth at the head of three thousand regular cavalry and about thirty thousand others, mounted on Galloways. It is said that he was confident of success, seeing that nearly the whole chivalry of England was absent. He rode into Cumberland, took the peel or castle of Liddel on the 2d of October, and then marched into the bishopric of Durham. While

he lay at Bear Park, near the city of Durham, the English assembled an army in Auckland Park. The Scots were ignorant of all the movements of the English: Douglas, the famous knight of Liddesdale, who had scoured the country as far as Ferryhill, was intercepted on his return by the English at Sunderland bridge. He cut his way through them, but lost five hundred of his best men. David, though taken by surprise, immediately formed his troops, and a decisive battle was fought at Neville's Cross. The English counted among their forces three thousand archers, and these men as usual decided the affair. David, after being twice wounded, was forcibly made prisoner by one Copland, a gentleman of Northumberland. Three earls and forty-nine barons and knights shared the fate of the king. The earl of Menteith, who had accepted office under Edward, and the earl of Fife, who had done homage to Edward Baliol, were condemned as traitors without any form of trial, by the king in council at Calais. Menteith was executed, but Fife was reprieved on account of his relationship, his mother having been niece to Edward I. King David was soon carried to London and safely lodged in the Tower.

In the mean time Edward's ally, the countess de Montfort, continued to defend the inheritance of her infant son, being well supported by an English force of one thousand men-at-arms and eight thousand foot, under the command of Sir Thomas d'Agworth. On the night of the 18th of June, 1347, while her bitter enemy, Charles of Blois, was lying before Roche-de-Rien, which he was besieging with fifteen thousand men, he was suddenly attacked by the English. In the confusion of a nocturnal battle, Sir Thomas was twice taken prisoner, and twice rescued by his brave followers. A sortie from the garrison finished this affair: the French were thoroughly beaten and dispersed; Charles of Blois was taken prisoner and sent over to England, to add another royal captive to those already in Edward's power.

THE SIEGE OF CALAIS (1347 A.D.)

Edward, meanwhile, pressed the blockade of Calais. As it was a place of incredible strength, he wisely resolved not to throw away the lives of his soldiers in assaults, but to reduce it by famine. He girded it on the land side by entrenchments, and he built so many wooden houses for the accommodation of his troops that his encampment looked like a second town growing round the first; the old French writers, indeed, call it *la ville de Bois*. At the same time his fleet blockaded the harbour and cut off all communication by sea. John de Vienne, the governor of Calais, could not mistake Edward's plan, and, to save his provisions, he determined to rid himself of such as are called, in the merciless language of war, "useless mouths." Seventeen hundred poor people, of both sexes and of all ages, were turned out of the town, and driven towards the English lines. Edward gave them all a good dinner, and then dismissed them into the interior of the country, even presenting them with a little money to supply their immediate wants. As provisions waxed low the governor made a fresh search for "useless mouths," and five hundred more of the inhabitants were thrust out of the town: but this time Edward was not so merciful, and all of them are said to have perished miserably between his lines and the town walls, as the governor would not readmit them.

A French fleet, attempting to relieve the place, was met by the earl of Oxford, and carried to England. After this the hopes of the garrison began to fail them, and they wrote to King Philip that they had eaten their horses,

their dogs, and all the unclean animals they could procure, and that nothing was left for them but to eat one another. This letter was intercepted by the English; but Philip knew the straits to which they were reduced, and resolved to make a great effort to save this important place. The *oriflamme*, the sacred banner of France, which was not to be used except against infidels, was unfurled; the vassals of the crown were summoned from all parts; and, in the month of July, Philip marched towards Calais. That town, however, was only approachable by two roads—the one along the seashore, the other over bogs and marshes; and Edward guarded both—the one with his ships and boats, which were crowded with archers; the other by means of towers, fortified bridges, and a great force of men-at-arms and archers, under the command of the brave earl of Derby, who, as well as Sir Walter Manny, had come from Gascony for this great enterprise. Philip was not bold enough to attempt either passage; and after a fruitless attempt at negotiation, and an idle challenge, he withdrew his army and left Calais to its fate. When the faithful garrison had witnessed his departure, they hung out the flag of England, and asked to capitulate. Edward, enraged at their obstinate resistance, refused them any terms, saying that he would have an unconditional surrender. Sir Walter Manny, and many barons who were then present, pleaded in favour of the men of Calais. "I will not be alone against you all," said the king. "Sir Walter, you will tell the captain that six of the notable burgesses must come forth naked in their shirts, bare-legged, with halters round their necks, and the keys of the town and castle in their hands. On these I will do my will, and the rest I will take to my mercy."

When Sir Walter Manny reported this hard condition to John de Vienne, that governor went to the market-place and ordered the church bells to be rung: the people—men, women, and children—repaired to the spot, and, when they had heard Edward's message, they all wept piteously, and were incapable of forming any resolution. Things were in this state when the richest burgess of the town, who was called Messire Eustace de St. Pierre, rose up and said before them all, "Gentlemen, great and little, it were a great pity to let these people perish; I will be the first to offer up my life to save theirs." After him another notable burgess, a very honest man, and of great business, rose and said that he would accompany his compeer Messire Eustace; and this one was named Messire Jehan d'Aire. After him rose up Jaques de Wisant, who was very rich in goods and lands, and said that he would accompany his two cousins, as did Peter Wisant his brother: then the fifth and the sixth offered themselves, which completed the number the king demanded. The governor, John de Vienne, mounted a small hackney, for his wounds prevented him from walking, and conducted them to the gate. The English barriers were opened, and the six were admitted to the presence of Edward, before whom they prostrated themselves, and presenting the keys, begged for mercy. All the barons, knights, and others who were there present, shed tears of pity; but the king eyed them very spitefully, for much did he hate the people of Calais; and then he commanded that their heads should be struck off. Every Englishman entreated him to be more merciful, but he would not hear them. Then Sir Walter Manny said, "Ha! gentle sire, let me beseech you to restrain your wrath! You are renowned for nobleness of soul—do not tarnish your reputation by such an act as this. These worthy men have, of their own free will, nobly put themselves at your mercy, in order to save their fellow-citizens." Upon this the king made a grimace, and said, "Let the headsman be summoned." But the queen of England, who had joined her husband after the battle of Neville's Cross, and was far advanced in her

pregnancy, fell on her knees, and with tears said, "Ah! gentle sire! since I have crossed the sea with great danger, I have never asked you anything: now I humbly pray, for the sake of the Son of the holy Mary and your love of me, that you will have mercy on these six men." The king looked at her, and was silent awhile: then he said, "Dame, I wish you had been somewhere else; but I cannot refuse you—I put them at your disposal." Philippa caused the halters to be taken from their necks, gave them proper clothes and a good dinner, and then dismissed them with a present of six nobles each.

On the following day, August 4th, 1347, the king and queen rode towards the town, which they entered to the sound of trumpets, drums, and all kinds of warlike instruments. They remained there until the queen was delivered of a daughter, who was called Margaret of Calais; and after that they returned to England, Edward having agreed to a truce with Philip. On the 14th of January, 1348, he asked the advice of his parliament touching the prosecution of the war with France. The commons, suspecting that this was but a prelude to the demand of a subsidy, declined giving any answer. When the parliament met again, on the 17th of March, the king told them that the French were making mighty preparations to invade England, and he demanded an aid on that account. In real truth there was no danger whatever; but, after bitter complaints of taxation and consequent poverty, three-fifteenths were voted to be levied in three years.

In the course of the following year he commanded in a naval battle against the Spaniards belonging to the ports of the Bay of Biscay, who had given him many causes of discontent by joining the French and by plundering his trading vessels. The battle was fought within sight of the hills behind Winchelsea, whence the queen's servants watched it with an anxious eye, and the Spaniards were completely defeated, with the loss of fourteen ships. As if in mockery of the petty carnage of men, who, doing their most, could only sacrifice a few thousand lives at a time, and on a given spot, the Black Death now invaded Europe, destroying its hundreds of thousands and depopulating hundreds of towns and cities at one and the same time.[1]

THE BLACK DEATH

The Black Death is alleged to have had its origin in the centre of China, in or about the year 1333, and is reported to have been accompanied by various phenomena in the earth and atmosphere of a very novel and destructive character. Nearly every infectious or contagious disease which has desolated mankind appears to have had its origin in the farthest East, and to have travelled along thence to Europe. It is alleged that, before it reached the West, the Black Death exhausted itself in the place of its origin. Like most other plagues, it was infinitely more destructive at the commencement of its career than after it had endured for a time. In course of time, either the original virus of the disease is weakened, or those who are most susceptible of it are removed by death, or remedial measures are discovered which check or extinguish it. For more than three centuries the plague wasted England, though at no time, it seems, so seriously as at its first and last visitations.

The Black Death, as our forefathers called it, from the dark purple blotches which appeared on the skin when the blood and tissues had become wholly disorganised through the virulence of the disorder, still lingers in the East, under the name of the Levant or oriental plague. But the progress of sanitary science has probably put an end to the worst ravages of a disease which

was so terrible more than five centuries ago. In England it does not seem to have been assisted by any prevalent distress among the people. The period just before the plague was one of prosperity and abundance; and though our forefathers were immeasurably unclean in their habits and surroundings, and remained unclean for centuries afterwards, the best conditions of life do not appear to have given an immunity from the plague. Among the victims of the first year were one of Edward's daughters and three archbishops of Canterbury. So the narrative given us by Boccaccio proves that all classes were equally affected, for the ladies and gentlemen who retire in the *Decameron* to tell each other stories in a country house on the road to Fiesole had all of them lost relations by the plague. The Black Death visited Christ church, Canterbury, very lightly, for a century before the prior had laid on pure water from the hills to the monastery.

On the 1st of August, 1348, the disease made its appearance in the seaport towns of Dorsetshire, and travelled slowly westwards and northwards, through Devon and Somerset, to Bristol. In order to arrest the progress of the mortality, the authorities of Gloucestershire prohibited all intercourse with the citizens of Bristol. It was in vain; the plague spread to Oxford, where it was terribly destructive, and travelling slowly in the same measured way, reached London by the 1st of November. It appeared in Norwich on the 1st of January, and thence spread northwards. Later in the year 1349, the Scotch made one of their customary raids into England, and, as they ravaged the north, invented an oath, "By the foul death of the English." On their retreat they were attacked by the pestilence in the forest of Selkirk, and the northern part of the island suffered as seriously as the more populous south. The mortality was, no doubt, enormous and appalling. It is probable that one-third of the population perished. To be sure, panic always exaggerates numbers. One chronicler says that nine out of ten died. Similar amplifications, which have been heedlessly accepted by writers who are inexperienced in possibilities, are found in all the chroniclers. We are told that sixty thousand persons perished in Norwich between January and July, 1349. Norwich was probably the second city in the kingdom at the time, and Norfolk was certainly the richest county; but the number is twice as much as the population of both city and county at the time. Joshua Barnes,[l] the author of a diffuse life of Edward III, pretends to give exact information as to the persons who died in the principal English cities. His numbers are undoubtedly untrustworthy. The estimate nearest to likelihood is that of Knighton.[h] He was a canon of Leicester, and lived a short time after the events. He tells us that the deaths in the three parishes of Leicester town were 1,480. Even this number is probably exaggerated, for there is reason to conclude that at this time the population of Leicester was under 3,500.

Every town had its plague-pit. That of London was a spot afterwards occupied by the Charterhouse, and purchased for the purpose of sepulture by Sir Walter Manny, one of Edward's captains. Hecker estimates the loss of population in Europe at twenty-five millions, a moderate and probable calculation. No doubt the ravages of the pestilence were more general among the poorer classes. But, as we have already stated, the more opulent were not unaffected by it. The disease made havoc among the secular and regular clergy, and we are told that a notable decline of learning and morals was thenceforward observed among the clergy, many persons of mean acquirements and low character stepping into the vacant benefices. Even now the cloister of Westminster abbey is said to contain a monument in the great flat stone, which we are told was laid over the remains of the many monks who

perished in the great death. The novelist Boccaccio dwells on the effect which the mortality caused in the character of the survivors, and how panic or despair made men callous, reckless, superstitious, heartless, cruel, and licentious; and Sismondi, in his great history of the French people, and of the Italian Republics, has collected contemporaneous evidence to the same effect.

The Black Death formed an epoch; and, for many years afterwards, facts were computed according to their nearness from the great pestilence. A century after the event, Gascoigne[m] makes it the era of the new departure in Oxford, after which learning, morality, and the adequate discharge of duties began to wane; the universities were, relatively speaking, deserted, and the whole spirit of society was changed. It is said by Sir Harris Nicolas that of the three years, 1349, 1361, and 1369, in which note was made of the extraordinary virulence of a disease now become sporadic, the first pestilence was said to have lasted four months; the second, through the winter, for eight months and nineteen days; the third, for nearly three months. These dates of duration, given centuries after the event, cannot be accepted as authentic, but they are indirect testimony of the singular impression which the calamity left on the mind of England. In several Hertfordshire manors it was the practice for thirty years to head the schedule of expenditure with an enumeration of the lives which were lost, and the tenancies which were vacated after the great death of 1348. If some antiquary were to have the patience to peruse and tabulate the taxing rolls of Edward I, and compare the names of residents in the several manors with the entries of tax-paying inhabitants resident in the same manors after the great plague, he would undoubtedly find that thousands of names perished from the manor registers. It may be noted that the foundation of colleges in Oxford, which was rapidly proceeding before this stupendous event, ceased for many years, when it was taken up with renewed vigour.[i]

THE STATUTE OF LABOURERS

The effects of this plague are to be traced in the acts of the English government. Lands went out of cultivation from the want of labourers; and those who could carry away their capital fled to other countries. On the 1st of December, 1349, the king issued a precept to the mayors and bailiffs of all the ports, stating that no small portion of the people being dead of the pestilence, and the treasury of the kingdom being greatly exhausted, it had been notified to him that many persons were quitting the country with their wealth, which, if tolerated, would leave the land equally destitute of men and money; and upon these grounds he directed that no man be suffered to leave the kingdom, except he be a merchant, notary, or messenger. But the black plague left still more enduring effects than the great mortality—soon to be repaired by hasty marriages—or the emigration, thus forcibly arrested. It produced the statute of Labourers—an arbitrary act, whose principles, however gradually mitigated, pervaded the relations of employer and servant long after the days of feudal despotism, and which still cling to our institutions in the law of Settlement. The statute was one of unmitigated selfishness. But it appears to be an universal law of such visitations, in times which looked upon them only as manifestations of the divine wrath, and not of the mercy which was to bring good out of evil, that they rendered the powerful more oppressive, the rich more greedy, and the sensual more abandoned. The author of the *Continuation of the Chronicle of William de Nangis*[n] says, speaking of the Continent, that after the pestilence men became more covetous and litigious

—charity growing more cold, and iniquity and ignorance more abounding. There were few left to teach the young. The generation was demoralised.

The preamble of this remarkable statute states the exigency which demanded it, without any of those attempts to conceal a real motive which modern legislation sometimes resorts to: "Because a great part of the people, and especially of workmen and servants, late died of the pestilence, many seeing the necessity of masters, and great scarcity of servants, will not serve unless they may receive excessive wages." The workmen and servants were practically aware of the natural law which regulates wages: dependence upon the number of labourers seeking employment. The government set their ordinances in opposition to that natural law. It was enacted that every able-bodied man and woman, not being a merchant, or exercising any craft, or having estate or land, should be bounden to serve, whenever required so to do, at the wages accustomed to be given in the twentieth year of the king, and in five or six common years next before. And that if any man or woman, whether free or bond, should be required to serve at such customary wages, and would not, he or she should be committed to the next gaol. It also enacted that labourers departing from their service should be imprisoned; and that those masters who consented to give the higher wages should be liable to be mulcted in double the amount paid or promised. The statute then goes on to apply the same regulations to all artificers—saddlers, skinners, white-tawers, cordwainers, tailors, smiths, carpenters, masons, tylers, shipwrights, carters. But to balance the low wages against the price of commodities, it was also enacted that butchers, fishmongers, brewers, bakers, poulterers, and all sellers of victual, should be bound to sell the same for a reasonable price. It was moreover enacted that no person should give alms to such as might be able to labour, or presume to favour such in their sloth, under pain of imprisonment.

ROBERT BRANCH, MAYOR OF LYNN, TIME OF EDWARD III

But the laws of nature were too strong for the laws of policy. Two years after, we have another statute, which recites that, "it is given the king to understand in this present parliament, that the said servants, having no regard to the said ordinances, but to their ease and singular covetise, do withdraw themselves to serve great men and others, unless they have livery, and wages to the double and treble of what they were wont to take before." A scale of wages is then set forth for labourers in husbandry; and the wages of carpenters, masons, tylers, and others concerned in building, are also fixed. The principle of confining the labourer to one locality is established by enacting that, with the exception of the inhabitants of Stafford, Lancaster, Derby, Craven, and of the Welsh and Scotch marches—who may come and go to other places in harvest time—"none of them go out of the town where he dwelleth in the winter, to serve the summer, if he may serve in the same town." The first statute of Labourers, in what regards a fixed rate of wages,

[1351 A.D.]

could not have been enforced without a limitation of the area in which the labourer should seek employment, as defined by the second statute. That law of God which plants in the heart of man the desire to ameliorate his condition, had gradually, without the sanction of any written law, put an end to the property of one human being in another, to a considerable degree, when this statute of Labourers was enacted. Had the pestilence come a century earlier, when the distinctions between the bondman and the free were in far higher efficiency, no laws for regulating wages, or for binding the labourer to the soil, would have been needed. When the slave had died in the common visitation, the master would have lost the services of the man, but he would have had one mouth less to feed. His land would have been untilled, and he must have borne the infliction, as if it were a murrain of his cattle. The pestilence came when labour and capital had become exchangers. But those who had been used to command labour upon their own terms were impatient of the inevitable alteration, when the pestilence exhibited to the free labourers the natural advantage of their reduced numbers. They demanded a free exchange of their property with the other property of food and money. A free exchange, says the statute of Edward, is "to the great damage of the great men, and impoverishing of all the commonalty." But no selfish legislation could wholly prevent this free exchange.

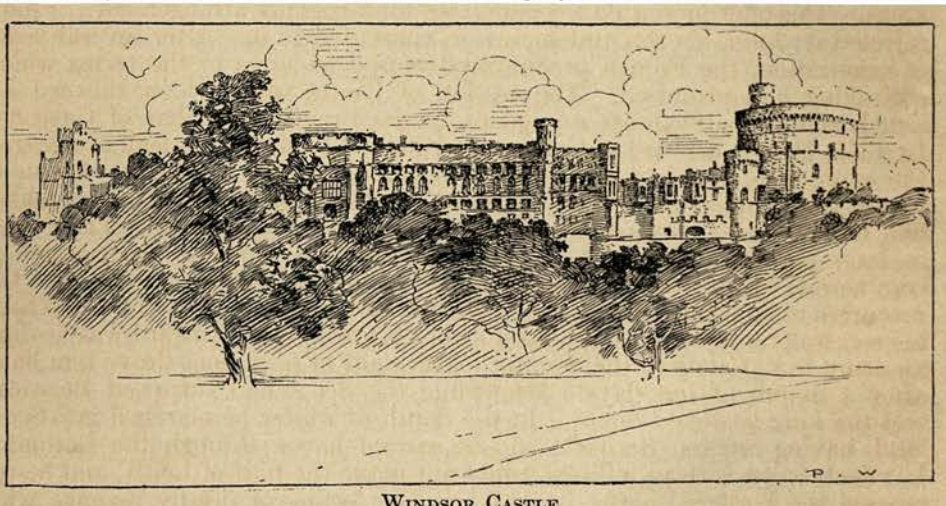
But, although we must regard this attempt to limit the rate of wages by statute as unjust and inefficient, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that there was a serious difficulty for the legislature of Edward III to surmount in some way. The act of parliament says that the labourers withdrew themselves from service unless they had wages to the double or treble of that they were wont to take before. This averment is confirmed by Knighton,[h] a chronicler of the time, who mentions as exorbitant wages the payment of a shilling a day, with his food, to a mower, and eightpence a day, with food, to a reaper. The shilling-a-day was equal to fifteen shillings of present money; and if that rate could have been maintained for all husbandry operations, the land must have gone out of cultivation for a time, till the balance of capital and labour had been restored by an equalisation of the amount of land to be tilled, and the number of labourers prepared to till it. The parliament stepped in with its rude tyrannical remedy, to repress the other tyranny. The statute said that a mower should receive fivepence. According to the same law, which also regulates the payment by wheat or money, at the will of the employer, fivepence was equal to half a bushel of wheat. The average produce of wheat per acre was less than six bushels. The extravagant demands of the labourers of the time of Edward III had no relation to the just proportion that must ever subsist between the rate of wages and the commercial value of the produce out of which the labour is to be paid and the capital maintained in its efficiency. It was not a time when such questions could be understood by the interested parties on either side.[b]

THE ORDER OF THE GARTER

It was after his return from Calais that Edward instituted an order of knighthood which has survived all his other achievements, as well as produced better fruits than his victories on the fields of France. This was the order of the Garter, which he established in 1350. The cause of this august institution has been attributed to such a frivolous accident as the dropping of a lady's garter in a ball-room; but a higher source has been sought for it than

the popular legend, by learned inquirers into English historical antiquarianism. According to some, it originated in the word "garter" having been given by the king as the password to his soldiers on the day of the battle of Crécy; while others allege that it was because, on this occasion, he ordered his garter to be raised on the point of a lance as the signal for onset. Others, going farther back, assert that the institution originated so early as the time of Richard I, who gave to his chief officers certain leather straps, to be bound round the left leg, in the storming of Acre, to distinguish them from the other soldiers of the crusade; and that Edward III merely revived an order which had fallen into utter decay. But it is unlikely that distinctions bestowed by such a chivalrous sovereign as the Lion Hearted could thus easily have dropped out of remembrance; and therefore Edward must be considered as its real founder, let the cause that prompted him be what it might.

Every preparation was made to give due grandeur and importance to the inauguration of this fairest and most highly honoured of all the chivalrous



WINDSOR CASTLE

(Originally built by William the Conqueror; largely rebuilt for Edward III, who was born at Windsor, by William of Wykeham; enlarged in reign of George IV)

institutions. "The king," says Froissart, "founded a chapel at Windsor in honour of St. George, and established canons there to serve God, with a handsome endowment. He then issued his proclamation for this feast by his heralds, whom he sent to France, Scotland, Burgundy, Hainault, Flanders, Brabant, and the empire of Germany, and offered to all knights and squires that might come to this ceremony, passports to last for fifteen days after it was over." At this splendid assembly of Windsor, which comprised the noblest of these several countries, the king and the elected knights "were clothed in gowns of russet, powdered with garters blue, wearing the like garters also on their right legs, and mantles of blue with scutcheons of St. George. It was intended that the knights of the Garter should consist of forty, but at this first installation only twenty-six were elected; and among their names, which have been carefully preserved, may be discovered those of the principal champions in the subsequent French and Scottish wars, and who founded some of the most distinguished families of England. But pre-eminent over them all, and highest in the list, was that of Edward the Black

Prince, late the hero of Crécy, and soon after to be the victor of Poitiers, who was the first knight of the Garter. In the long roll of illustrious princes, warriors, and statesmen, extending from that period to the present day, whose motto has been, *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, it would be difficult, perhaps impossible, considering the age in which he lived, to find a nobler and worthier character.*i*

THE BATTLE OF POITIERS (1356 A.D.)

Philip of Valois, who had held a troublesome possession of the throne of France for twenty-two years, died in August, 1350. It was a period when the war with England was suspended, without any real approach to a permanent peace. Edward had proposed to resign his pretensions to the French crown, on the condition that he should receive the absolute sovereignty of the provinces in France which had been held as fiefs by preceding English kings. This offer presented a secure basis for a friendly arrangement. Philip rejected it; John, his son and successor, consented to it. After several years of negotiation, the French procurators refused to agree to the terms which their king had promised. The cession of Calais, upon which Edward insisted, was probably more repugnant to the French than that of Gascony. In 1355, Prince Edward led an army from the walls of Bordeaux; ravaged the country to the foot of the Pyrenees; and, taking a northward course, laid in ashes cities and towns, and filled a fertile land with desolation, which had been unvisited by war for a hundred years. In those times, and even in later periods, the ravage of populous districts, and the destruction of commercial towns, have been defended upon the principle that to weaken the resources of an enemy is to abridge the duration of a time of warfare. Whilst his son was ravaging on the banks of the Garonne, King Edward was leading an army from Calais to the Somme. The want of provisions drove him back after a march of ten days. Meanwhile the Scots had surprised Berwick; and the king hastened home. In the depth of winter he marched into Scotland, having retaken Berwick, and he carried havoc through the Lothians. His fleet, laden with provisions, could not make the port of Leith; and he recrossed the border, leaving behind him the feeling of deadly revenge with which the Scots recorded this season of calamity as "the burnt Candlemas."

In July, 1356, Prince Edward, now known as the Black Prince, marched out of Bordeaux, upon a second expedition of waste and pillage. Ascending the Garonne as high as Agen, he turned to the provinces of Quercy, Limousin, and Auvergne. The time of the harvest and the vintage was at hand, but the corn was trodden under foot, and the vineyards destroyed. The little army was now in the very centre of France. King John was advancing from Chartres to drive back the marauders; and he crossed the Loire, at Blois, marching on towards Poitiers. Prince Edward was in a hostile country, and he could gain no knowledge of the line upon which the French were moving. He resolved, however, upon retreat. As the English army marched, also in the direction of Poitiers, "they wist not truly where the Frenchmen were," wrote Froissart,*j* whose narrative of the battle is here largely used; "but they supposed that they were not far off, for they could find no more forage, whereby they had great default of victual in their host; and some of them repented that they had destroyed so much as they had done before." On the 17th of September, being Saturday, the van of Prince Edward's small band fell in with the rear of King John's army. There was a skirmish, and those English who rode ahead saw all the fields covered with men-at-arms.

The French king entered into the city of Poitiers. The locality was full of recollections of the glory of France. Here Clovis defeated Alaric, king of the Visigoths. Here Charles Martel drove back an immense host of invading Moslems. Edward took up his quarters in a strong place, amongst hedges, vines, and bushes. On the Sunday morning, the French trumpet blew, and every man mounted on horseback, and went into the field, where the king's banner waved in the wind; and there was all the flower of France, with banners and pennons and rich armoury. Three knights went out to see the number of the English; and they reported that they estimated them at two thousand men-at-arms, and four thousand archers, and fifteen hundred other men; but that they were wisely ordered, and that they had lined the hedges and banks with archers, by a road on which four horsemen only could ride, and that at the end of that fortified way there were men-at-arms afoot, and archers before them, so that they would not easily be discomfited. Cardinal [Talleyrand de] Périgord then solicited the king that he might ride to the prince, and show him what danger he and his handful of Englishmen were in. The cardinal went, and the prince of Wales answered to his entreaties—"Sir, the honour of me and my people saved, I would gladly fall to any reasonable way." Between the armies rode the cardinal that Sunday; but could accomplish no agreement. Edward offered to surrender what he had won in that expedition, and to swear not to bear arms against the French king for seven years. But John required, finally, that the prince and a hundred knights should yield themselves prisoners. On the Monday morning, the 19th of September, the cardinal again came; but there was no remedy but to abide the battle. The French marshals approached with their battalions, and their horsemen entered the road where the great hedges were set full of archers. No bow was bent as the columns of cavalry proudly marched up that narrow way. But a command was given; and along the whole extent of that crowded lane, sudden showers of arrows turned what was a procession into a struggle of advance and retreat. At the first flight of the deadly shafts of the English archers, the horses rushed back, and flung out, and fell upon their riders. Then the Gascon men-at-arms went in amongst the press and slew the knights and squires in that great disorder. The French also, who were behind, recoiled; and on came the division of the duke of Normandy; and the men took their horses and fled, when they saw the dreaded archers coming down a little hill, on their flank and rear. Leaping on their horses, the reserve of men-at-arms of England now advanced; for the lord Chandos said to the prince, "Sir, take your horse and ride forth, the day is yours." And the prince cried, "Advance banner, in the name of God and of St. George!" Then he saw the lord Robert of Duras lying dead, and he told his men to take him upon a targe to the cardinal of Périgord, whose nephew he was, and to salute him by that token; for the cardinal's men were out in the field against him, which was not pertaining to the right order of arms. Onward the little army went into the thick of their enemies; and the archers shot so wholly together, that none durst come in their danger. At last the king's division encountered the Englishmen. There was Lord James Audley, always in the chief of the battle, and he was sore hurt, but as long as his breath served him he fought; and Warwick was there, and Suffolk, and many knights of Gascony. "King John was that day a full right good knight; if the fourth part of his men had done their endeavours as well as he did, the journey had been his in all likelihood." But the French fled from those fields of Beauvoir and Maupertuis, even to the gates of Poitiers. There was a great press to take the king; and he yielded to Sir Denys de Morbeyne, who promised to

bring him and his young son, Philip, to the prince of Wales. Where was the prince when John of France could not go forward because of the press around him? "The prince of Wales," says Froissart,† "who was courageous and cruel as a lion, took great pleasure to fight and chase his enemies." But Chandos said, "Set your banner a-high on this bush, that your people may draw hither; nor can I see banners nor pennons of the French; wherefore rest and refresh you, for ye be sore chafed." A red pavilion was set up; and the prince drunk wine; and many lords gathered around him as they came in from the chase. But shortly came up the kingly captive in great peril; for he was surrounded by English and Gascons, who had taken him out of the hands of Sir Denys Morbeyne, and strove which should have him. That night the prince of Wales made a supper in his lodging to the French king, and to the great lords that were prisoners. "And always the prince served before the king, as humbly as he could, and would not sit at the king's board, for any desire that the king could make, and exhorted him not to be of heavy cheer, for that King Edward, his father, should bear him all honour and amity, and accord with him so reasonably that they should be friends ever after." And the prince praised the king's great valiantness, and said that every Englishman who saw each man's deed plainly accorded to him the prize and chaplet. This scene, so gracefully performed by him who, a few hours before, was "courageous and cruel as a lion," was in perfect accordance with the system of chivalry. It is not a feeling to be despised—that gentleness and courtesy which prompted the words and actions of the prince, after this marvellous victory. The right hand of fellowship to a fallen foe is, happily, a principle that has survived the feudal ages in the wars of England. When policy, as in modern instances, has compelled her government to violate it, the people feel ashamed, and the public opinion of another generation reverses the judgment of those who have played the part of the ungenerous victor. On the day after the battle, the prince of Wales marched with his royal prisoner to Bordeaux, the great bulk of captive knights having been admitted to easy ransom.

FIGURE OF KNIGHT ON TOP OF CHANTRY

(Erected over Lord Edward le Despenser, who held high command under Edward the Black Prince. Tewkesbury Abbey)

FRANCE DURING JOHN'S CAPTIVITY

On the 24th of May, 1357, the Black Prince returned to London, in a triumphal procession, with his royal prisoner. In the pageant the captive—as if the spirit of chivalry was set in contrast with the old Roman pride of leading conquered kings in chains—was shown to the people as an honoured guest; whilst the winner of the great field of Poitiers rode humbly beside him. King John was lodged in the Savoy, a pleasant palace belonging to the duke of Lancaster, King Edward's son; and in the winter following there were jousts in Smithfield, in which the kings of England, of France, and of Scotland were present to take part in the feats of arms. King John was then removed to Windsor with his son Philip. It was a festive season in England.

In France there was the extremity of suffering. There were heavy sums to be raised for the ransoms engaged to be paid for the prisoners of Poitiers; and the unhappy cultivators were ground down to the lowest point of misery by the lords of the soil, who had fled in terror before the stout English bowmen. On the 21st of May, 1358, commenced that insurrection of the peasants which was called the *Jacquerie*, from the nickname which the poor French villein bore of Jacques Bonhomme.

During the captivity of John, the government of the dauphin, Charles, was harassed by contending factions; and the kingdom was in a condition little short of anarchy. John settled with Edward the conditions of a peace, to take place upon the expiration of the truce. He consented to the hard terms which the king of England insisted upon; for a prince of the blood, Charles of Navarre, called the Bad, was adding to the distractions of the kingdom, by setting up claims to the crown. But the regency of France rejected the terms which their captive monarch had agreed to. Edward again invaded France in the autumn of 1359, with a more powerful army than he had ever before assembled; and at the end of March he was encamped before Paris. The fatigues of his winter campaign had greatly reduced his numbers; and now, beleaguering a city which was too strong for assault, he was in want of provisions, and was compelled to retire. The route towards Chartres was covered with men and horses that dropped from hunger and exhaustion; and all the superstition that in those days clung to the firmest minds, was called up by a terrible storm, which swept the camp with a deluge of rain, and which made Edward think of that vengeance of heaven that awaited the man of blood. Thoughts of pacification entered his heart. Negotiations were set on foot, and the great peace of Bretigny was concluded on the 8th of May. The king of England resigned his pretensions to the crown of France, and to the territories of Normandy, Anjou, and Maine. He restored all the conquered places, with the exception of Guines and Calais. He was content to be lord of Aquitaine, retaining Gascony, Poitou, and other dependencies, in full sovereignty. Three million crowns of gold were to be paid in six years for the ransom of King John. The captive king was set at liberty before the end of the year. But peace with England brought no tranquillity to France. Amidst their distractions, King John went back to his wasted country. Petrarch had proceeded to Paris upon an embassy to congratulate the king upon his return to his dominions, and he thus describes the scene which met his eyes: "When I viewed this kingdom, which had been desolated by fire and sword, I could not persuade myself it was the same I had formerly beheld —fertile, rich, and flourishing. On every side it now appeared a dreadful desert; extreme poverty, lands untilled, fields laid waste, houses gone to ruin, except here and there one that was defended by some fortification, or which was enclosed within the walls; everywhere were seen the traces of the English, and the dreadful havoc they had made. Touched by such mournful effects of the rage of man, I could not withhold my tears." Petrarch might have added the ravages of the *Jacquerie* and of the Free Companions, who had been pillaging since the truce of 1357, to the havoc of the English.

THE ENGLAND OF CHAUCER

The condition of the people of England at the epoch of the Peace of Bretigny presents a striking contrast to that of the people of France. With the exception of the miseries produced by the second pestilence of 1361, we may

[1361–1363 A.D.]

regard the seventh decade of the fourteenth century as a period of English prosperity. France was devoured by the companies of adventurers and brigands who obeyed no law. England was only disturbed by the transition from serfdom to free labour, in which the labourers asserted their own importance somewhat beyond the limits of discretion. France was weighed down by the oppressions through which property was extorted from the industrious classes, whether by the exactions of the nobles, or the unlimited taxation of the government; and the feudal confederacy to obtain money from a country so devastated by war was met by the *Jacquerie* of the peasants, and the revolts of the burgesses. England, whenever a tax was demanded for carrying on hostilities, had a parliament, which always turned round steadily upon the king, and required extension of liberties or redress of grievances. At the commencement of the war with France in 1340, before a subsidy was given, the king's commissioners had to show letters patent authorising them "to grant some graces to the great and small of the kingdom." In 1348 the commons granted a subsidy on condition that no illegal levying of money should take place. In 1351 a statute was passed that no one should be constrained to find men-at-arms, other than those who held land by such services, except by consent of parliament. There was always a struggle going forward between the king and the parliament; but it was no longer a struggle merely between the king and the nobles. The commons had obtained an integral share in the government; and before the end of the reign they were strong enough to remove an administration, and impeach those whom they considered evil advisers of the crown.

CHAUCER

This strength of the deputies of the people is conclusive evidence that the middle classes, during nearly half a century, had attained so much wealth and consideration, that the old feudal relations of society may be deemed nearly at an end. There probably is no better evidence of the many distinctions of rank amongst the laity, which now existed, than the statute of Apparel of 1363. It has a few words about regulating the diet of servants; but the chief clauses are intended to restrain "the outrageous and excessive apparel of divers people against their estate and degree."

The statute begins with servants, called grooms—as well servants of lords, as of artificers and tradesmen. They and their wives are to wear cloth of a certain low price, with no gold, or silver, or silk, or embroidery. This enactment shows that there was an amount of luxury amongst this class, which ill accords with the notion which some entertain, that below the aristocracy all was rude and miserable. The first enacting clause about dress thus comprises mechanics and commercial servants; the last relates to labourers in husbandry —carters, ploughmen, shepherds, cowherds. If they had not forty shillings of goods or chattels, they were to wear only blanket and russet, and girdles of linen, according to their estate. In these two classes must have been

comprised the bulk of the population. Chaucer, the shrewdest observer and the truest painter of manners—who, although he wrote the *Canterbury Tales* twenty years after this period, would naturally in his retirement describe the social state of which he had been a busy member—has little notice of the humbler classes of the community, the peasants, the servants, and the working artisans. Chaucer's Ploughman was a man of "goods and chattels," who though he had spread many a load of dung, and would thresh and ditch, yet paid his tithes and was kind to the poor. He was the small farmer, of whom the land was full—the humble tenant, who was no longer at the bidding of his lord. He was the Parson's brother. The attendant of Chaucer's Knight was a yeoman. The statute of Apparel places the yeoman under the same regulations as the people of handicraft, and they were to wear no vesture of higher price than forty shillings the whole cloth, without things of gold and silver and costly fur. Chaucer's Yeoman comes in his coat and hood of green, with his sheaf of peacocks' arrows, and his mighty bow. He knows all the usage of woodcraft, for he is a forester; and in spite of statute he has a silver image of St. Christopher, the patron of field-sports, on his breast. He is a specimen of the bold race that won Crécy and Poitiers—men who were shooting at the butts on every common in England, while the French peasantry, who were not intrusted with the cross-bow till after the Peace of Bretigny, and then again were forbidden their manly exercises, were playing at dice and draughts in imitation of their lords. Chaucer's men of handicraft are the Haberdasher, Carpenter, Weaver, Dyer, and Tapiser (tapestry maker). They are clothed each in the livery of his "solemn and great fraternity." They have chattels and rent enough to be aldermen, a dignity to which their wives look forward, in the hope to be called Madame. The Prentice to such worthies has been painted in one of the *Canterbury Tales*—a proper stout fellow, full of jollity, loving the tavern better than the shop—a dancer at bridals, and a dice-player. The Cook of Chaucer so describes the dissolute youth, probably of gentle blood, who aped the manners of the great in an age when luxurious indulgence was becoming common to all ranks. The amount of individual wealth gave privileges which were not accorded to the mere social condition. There were degrees of permitted luxury amongst people of handicraft, citizens and burgesses, which the law recognised then, as much as individual homage does now. The tradesman who possessed five hundred pounds might wear cloth of silk, and a reasonable decoration of silver trimmings, and their wives and daughters might wear fur turned up with minever—even as gentlemen and esquires of a hundred a year. The citizens of Chaucer, who had chattels enough to be aldermen, were thus lifted out of the less wealthy class—whose wives might wear no silken veils, and must be content with cat-skin fur.

The gentlemen and esquires of the statute correspond with the Franklin of Chaucer—he of the beard as white as a daisy—the great householder, whose hospitality was so abundant that "it snewed in his house of meat and drink." In his hall stood his table ready covered all the long day. He gave no sanction to the recent innovation of "the privy parlour," in which the lord of the mansion sometimes now sought to evade the duties of the festive hall. The Franklin was a public man—a sire at sessions, a knight of the shire. He was only below the knight in rank and raiment, according to the statute. The knights possessing four hundred marks by the year might wear what they pleased except ermine; and their wives might have pearls and precious stones on their heads. Chaucer's Knight comes in his soiled cassock, and his coat of mail. He had late returned from fighting in mortal battles, and

[1363 A.D.]

was about to perform his pilgrimage. His son, the young Squire, had been warring in companionship with his father; but his locks are now curled, and his short gown, with sleeves long and wide, is embroidered with white and red flowers, as it were a mead. The Sergeant at Law, who no doubt takes rank with the great of the land, appears not to have been proud of his dress; for he rode but humbly in a medley coat, girt with a sash of silk, with small bars. But his deportment was far more impressive than his dress—"his words were so wise"—a busy man, and yet one that appeared busier than he was. The Physician was by his side, in his bright purple cloak and his furred hood—one who, although he talked of the ascendancy of the planets and of magic natural, was learned in Æsculapius and Galen. Of the laity of this goodly company we have not forgotten the Wife of Bath, in speaking of apparel. She was a cloth-maker, with great custom; but her coverchiefs or head-dresses were of the finest quality, and her hosen were of scarlet. What were ordinances of apparel to her, who "husbands at the church-door had she had five"? If the statute affected her, she would despise it as most others did—for it was repealed within a year of its enactment.

Of this company of Chaucer who travelled from the inn of Southwark to St. Thomas's shrine at Canterbury,[1] seven of the characters belong to the ecclesiastical establishment of England—the Prioress, the Monk, the Friar, the Clerk of Oxford, the Parson, the Sumptnour (summoner), and the Pardoner. Looking at them generally in connection with the other classes that the statute of Apparel indicates, and that our first great English poet describes, we cannot but be impressed with this general view of a condition of society in which the distinctions of rank are so clearly marked, but in which there is no slavish submission either to high blood, or great wealth, or outward sanctity, or professional distinction. Henry Bailey, the host of the Tabard, is the director of the pilgrimage. He presides over the supper that precedes the departure of the pilgrims, and he suggests that to shorten the journey each "should tellen tales alway." The "very perfect gentle Knight" feels no humiliation at agreeing to this proposal; and he relates his noble romance of chivalry as readily as the Miller tells his tale with its broad jests. The Prioress and the Nun have no false shame in being under the safeguard of the courtesy of the Knight, who is "meek as is a maid." The Sergeant at Law, who sits as judge at assize, and the solemn Physician, are wayside and board companions with the Haberdasher and the other worthies of the London guilds. The lordly Monk, looking with some pity upon the meek Parson and the studious Clerk of Oxford, has no scorn of his poor unworldly brothers in their humility. The prosperous Franklin listens to the slender and choleric Reve, who might be his neighbour's steward; and the Merchant, in his Flanders hat, "sounding alway the increase of his winning," has no fear of his position being compromised by the familiarity of the rough Shipman, on his wretched hackney, dressed in his gown of faldings or coarse cloth. The Cook, and the Manciple, a provider of commons for the inns of court, make mirth for the company by their quarrels and their jokes; and the Friar tells a story of diablerie in dispraise of the Sumptnour. Surely in this fellowship, in which there is no arrogance and no servility, we may recognise a state of society where class distinctions were so marked that haughtiness and reserve were not thought necessary for the assertion of individual dignity; but in which there was a natural respect of man for his fellows—the spirit which had made England great.

[1 The Canterbury Tales in their underlying design are an exposition of chivalrous sentiment. This is thrown into relief by the different positions of the characters introduced.]

THE WAR IN CASTILE

England was not permitted to remain many years at peace. If the chivalrous King John had lived—he who, when the Treaty of Bretigny was not faithfully kept by the French, came again to England, and yielded himself prisoner—it is probable that the high regard of the two kings for the courage and courtesy of each other might have cemented a friendship which would have extended to the people of each realm. John returned to England in 1363, leaving France under the government of the dauphin. He died in 1364, at the Savoy; and the dauphin became king of France, as Charles V. Without the chivalrous qualities of his father—for his prudence had been too conspicuous at Poitiers, where he left his young brother, Philip, to fight alone by the side of the king—he possessed a sagacity of more practical value in a sovereign than personal bravery. "There never was a king," said Edward III, "who cared so little about arming himself, and yet gave me so much to do as this Charles." The prince of Wales, with the title of prince of Aquitaine, was appointed to the possession and government of the southern provinces which had been ceded to Edward at the Peace of Bretigny; and with all the splendour of his reputation, and the high qualities which he really possessed, he disgusted the nobles of Gascony by his haughty bearing. The people of the ceded provinces were indignant that they should have been transferred in complete sovereignty to England. They clung, as Frenchmen, to the feudal superiority of France; and they resolved to obey the English king with their lips, but never to forget their allegiance to the crown of which English kings had been the vassals. Their discontent was smouldering, when the prince of Wales took up the cause of Peter I, king of Castile and Leon, who had been driven from his throne by his half-brother, Henry, assisted by a strong band of Free Companions, under the command of the great adventurer, Du Guesclin. Peter has been branded with the name of "the Cruel." His private history is so complicated with his public character, that we must content ourselves with stating that his imprisonment and supposed murder of his wife, Blanche de Bourbon, provoked the invasion of Castile by the French forces in 1366, and the dethronement of the unpopular king. Peter had previously made an alliance with Edward III, and he now fled to the court of the Black Prince at Bordeaux. It is difficult to understand the motive which induced the policy of attempting the restoration of Peter to his throne, beyond hostility to a cause which Charles of France had espoused. In 1367, the Black Prince led a great army of English, Gascons, and Normans from Bordeaux; and entering Navarre, by the pass of Roncesvalles, met the army of Henry in Castile, near the right bank of the Ebro. The battle of Najera [or Navarrete] was a complete victory, in which the Black Prince displayed the resources of a great commander even more remarkably than in his previous successes. This was not a battle in which the proud and pampered nobles of France were intoxicated by their own superiority of numbers, as at Crécy and Poitiers. It was a battle of real soldiery on both sides—the English yeomen against the Free Companions—Chandos against Du Guesclin. It was a victory not only useless to the prince of Wales, but injurious in many ways to himself and his country. The faithless Peter, when he had been restored, refused to abide by his promise of paying the cost of the war. Edward's army was reduced to the utmost misery by the want of provisions; and the prince had contracted a fatal malady which in a few years terminated his career of glory. He hastily returned to Gascony. The ingrate king was in six months hurled from

his throne, and murdered by his half-brother. The greatest trophy of this campaign was the capture of Du Guesclin. An old writer has related a scene at Bordeaux singularly illustrative of the manners of this age. Bertrand goes to the prince, in the gray coat which he wears, and the prince cannot keep from laughing when he sees him, and says, "Well, Bertrand, how fare ye?" Bertrand bows a little, and replies, "Sir, when it shall please you, I may fare better; many a day have I heard the rats and mice, but the song of birds it is long since I heard. I shall hear them when it is your pleasure." The prince tells Bertrand he may go, if he will swear never to bear arms against him, or to assist Henry of Spain. Bertrand refuses, and reproaches the prince that he had gone to Spain through covetousness, and in hopes to have the throne after Peter's death: but that Peter had cheated him, for which he thanked Peter heartily. "By my soul, he is right," saith the prince. And then he tells Bertrand he shall go, but not without a good ransom. He answers that he is a poor knight, that his estate is mortgaged, that he owes ten thousand florins besides, and that the prince ought to be moderate. Edward replies that what Bertrand himself fixes he would be content with. Then Bertrand says that he ought not to value himself too low, and that he would engage to give for his freedom one hundred thousand double golden florins. "You cannot pay it," said the prince, "nor do I want it," and Bertrand protests that he would not give less than sixty thousand, and if Henry of Spain and the king of France would not lend them, all the sempstresses of France would spin the ransom for him. The prince would have quitted him for ten thousand double florins. All the barons marvel greatly, and Chandos says to Du Guesclin, "If you have need of any help, I will lend you ten thousand." "Sir," quoth Bertrand, "I thank you; but before I seek anything of you, I will try the people of my own country."

RENEWAL OF THE WAR

In 1368 the Spanish campaign was producing much public evil for the prince of Wales. He imposed a heavy tax upon the people of Gascony; and the great lords carried their complaints to the throne of Charles V. The interference of France was a violation of the Treaty of Bretigny; but Charles ventured to summon the prince of Aquitaine to answer the complaint, assuming the position of his feudal lord. The prince said he would come with sixty thousand lances. The great war was now renewed. Edward III reassumed the title of king of France. There can be no doubt that it was the settled policy of Charles to obtain possession of Gascony and the other ceded districts. King Edward was growing old. His son was in feeble health. The government of the English was a yoke of which the Gascon nobles and people were impatient. In that age of military adventurers, the leaders changed their sides without much scruple, and many of the fighting Gascons went over to the banner of France. The French king adopted a bold policy, and assembled a fleet at Harfleur for the invasion of England; and Philip of Burgundy was to be its commander. When he was a captive boy at Windsor, he asserted his title to the name of the Bold by striking the cup-bearer of Edward III for serving his master before the king of France. But Philip gave up the attempt to invade England; and he showed no rash disposition to encounter the duke of Lancaster, who had landed at Calais with a great army. The king of France would not allow a battle to be risked, which might terminate as other great battles had done. He suffered Lancaster to march

through the northern provinces. But in 1370 the French entered Gascony. The Black Prince took the field, and the royal princes of Anjou and Berri retired before him. Limoges had been betrayed to these dukes by the inhabitants; and during a month's siege Edward, sick almost to death, was carried in a litter from one point to another of the attack. The capital of Limousin was at length taken by storm. The last warlike act of the Black Prince was one which associates his name with the infamous system of cruelty that makes the individual bravery, endurance, and courtesy of the later feudal times look like a hollow mockery—a miserable imposture of self-glorification, trampling upon the higher principle that unites strength with mercy. Three thousand men, women, and children were butchered in cold blood when Limoges was taken. A few knights, resolved to battle to the last, placed their backs against a wall, and long fought against superior numbers. These Prince Edward ordered to be received to ransom. This was chivalry. Such contradictions show how unsafe a guide it was for the rulers of mankind; and how blessed were the people who the soonest escaped from its accursed dominion.

The Black Prince, in broken health, came back to England. His brother John of Gaunt, the duke of Lancaster, succeeded him in the government of Gascony. Du Guesclin was now at the head of a daring band; and those of Bordeaux who said of him, whom they called an ugly fellow—which in truth he was—"There is no castle, however strong, that would not soon surrender if he went thither to assault it," were true judges of his character. Wherever the English banner was displayed, Du Guesclin was there at the head of his adventurers. There were no great battles fought, for the French always avoided them. In vain Lancaster marched through France, from Calais to Bordeaux, in 1373. The French were ready to harass him by skirmishes, but not to fight in any general engagement. In vain Sir Robert Knolles led an army from Calais to the walls of Paris. A sagacious policy determined the French government to prolong an indecisive but most effective war. One by one the English lost many of their strong places. A truce was concluded in 1374, which lasted till 1377. The possessions which had been surrendered by the Treaty of Bretigny were all lost, with the exception of Bordeaux, Bayonne, and Calais. Too much of France was surrendered by that treaty to a foreign rule; and it was in the natural course of events that the feeling of nationality, to which its provisions were repugnant, and which an unwise rule had rendered more odious, should assert itself; and, gaining strength by every small success, leave England at last a very limited dominion, as the costly purchase of the ambition of forty years.

EDWARD'S LAST YEARS

In 1369, King Edward lost his queen, Philippa, the faithful wife of his boyhood and his age. In 1376, her first-born, the great prince of Wales, never rallying from the fever of his Spanish campaign, and worn out by the excitement of wars and conquests, which had begun from his earliest years, also died. To the old king remained John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, his third son (Lionel, the second, had died in 1368); Edward of Langley, duke of York; and Thomas of Woodstock, duke of Gloucester. After the death of Queen Philippa, the happy fortune of the king seems to have deserted him. When the prince of Wales returned to England, he regained the popularity which he had lost in Gascony, by opposing his father's government. The

expiring passions of dotage, more miserable than its tears, had thrown the conqueror of France under the dominion of a mistress, Alice Perrers. To her influence, and that of her creatures, the eldest son of the king was naturally opposed. With the support of the prince of Wales, the parliament, in 1376, forced a measure upon the king, in which her name is mentioned in connection with unlawful suits prosecuted by way of "maintenance." But it was also clear that the Black Prince looked with jealousy upon the power of John, duke of Lancaster, who was thought to aspire to the crown. Edward had the interests of his son to maintain, Richard of Bordeaux. The friends of Lancaster were accused of misdemeanours in the parliament of 1376; but the prince of Wales died, and Lancaster regained his influence.

It would be tedious for us to follow the ill-understood contests of the remaining span of Edward's life. Richard, then ten years of age, was presented to the houses of parliament as the successor to all the rights of his

MONUMENT OF EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE IN CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

father. But the influence of the duke of Lancaster was all-powerful. The speaker of the commons, William de la Marc, who had led the opposition supported by the prince of Wales, was imprisoned; and William of Wykeham was deprived of his temporalities, and dismissed the court. His merits will be ever associated with his splendid educational foundations of Winchester and New College, Oxford. Lancaster took up the cause of John Wycliffe, who was under prosecution for his opinions; and when the reformer was called to defend himself at St. Paul's before the bishop of London, the duke accompanied him, and a violent quarrel ensued between the laymen and the ecclesiastics. A riot, in which the citizens of London took part against the king's powerful son, ensued. Thus were the last few months of the life of Edward disturbed. He had completed the fiftieth or jubilee year of his reign in February, 1377, and he published a general amnesty for all offences—evidently an act of the ruling power in the state, for Wykeham was excluded. He died on the 21st of June, 1377, with none to soothe his last hours but Alice Perrers. She took the ring from his finger, and the mighty victor was alone with the all-conqueror.

THE ENGLISH CHURCH

The state of the English church will be more clearly developed in the next reign than in that of Edward III. During the half century in which he sat upon the throne, the outward magnificence of the ecclesiastical hierarchy had reached its height. The great churches were finished with a refinement of taste which has left succeeding ages to wonder and copy. Then were com-

pleted the cathedrals of Lincoln, Wells, Peterborough, Salisbury. The abbey church of Westminster lifted up its glorious arches in rivalry with those of Winchester, which its munificent bishop, Wykeham, had remodelled. London was covered with the houses of the mendicant orders, who have fixed their names upon the localities which they inhabited—Blackfriars, and Whitefriars, and Crutchedfriars, and Austinfriars. Parish churches were in almost every principal street of the metropolis. The rural parishes were as bountifully supplied for the ministrations of religion. But amidst all these external indications of a power which it might be supposed would never die, there was a growing conviction that this house was built upon the sands. A quarter of a century before the death of Edward III—in 1353—a law had been passed against provisors—those who obtained from the pope a reversion of benefices and church dignities. In 1356, Wycliffe began his career as an ecclesiastical reformer by writing his treatise called *The Last Ages of the Church.* In 1365, the pope having demanded the arrears of the tribute known as "Peter's pence," it was refused by the parliament, and Wycliffe strenuously supported this resistance to the demand. But there was something more formidable to the papal authority, and to the system which was founded upon it, than the acts of the legislature. There was a public opinion forming, which, before the circulation of books by printing, and with the imperfect communication of one district with another, was diffused in a very remarkable way through the country. A general feeling began to spread that the church dignitaries, and the religious orders, were more intent upon their own aggrandisement, and the gratification of their own luxury, than the upholding of the faith and duties of the Gospel. The mass of the people were ignorant of the essentials of religion, though they bowed before its forms. In the universities there were young men who were like Chaucer's clerk:

> "Sounding in moral virtue was his speech,
> And gladly would he learn and gladly teach."

To such the covert licentiousness of the monks, and the open profligacy of the mendicant orders, was a deep humiliation. They went forth, each to his small country cure, to speak of a holier religion than belonged to the worship of relics, or the purchase of indulgences. The sumptnours, who were the ministers of the extortions of the ecclesiastical courts, and the pardoners, who hawked about dispensations for sin, were their especial aversion. The satire of Chaucer was a reflection of the prevailing estimate of the monk, "full, fat, and in good point;" of the friar, "a wanton and a merry;" of the sumptnour, who thought "a man's soul was in his purse;" of the pardoner, with his wallet "full of pardon come from Rome all hot." In their sermons, secular priests now freely quoted the holy scriptures, in the common tongue; and they looked forward to the work which their great leader Wycliffe, the honoured professor of theology at Oxford, was preparing—the translation into English of Christ's Testament. His citation for heresy in the last year of Edward III was the tribute to his importance. In a few years the preaching of Wycliffe and his disciples would go through the land, scattering the corruptions of the church with a power that for a time seemed likely to shake the whole fabric of society. The age was not ripe for the great Reformation that then seemed impending. But out of Wycliffe's rectory of Lutterworth seeds were to be borne upon the wind, which would abide in the earth till they sprang up into the stately growth of other centuries.[b]

St. Andrew's, Westport

CHAPTER XIII

THE REIGN OF RICHARD II

[1377–1399 A.D.]

England, bound in with the triumphant sea,
Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege
Of watery Neptune, is now bound in with shame,
With inky blots, and rotten parchment bonds:
That England that was wont to conquer others,
Hath made a shameful conquest of itself.

Shakespeare (*Richard II, Act II, Scene I*).

The funeral obsequies of the late king occupied some time, but on July 16th, 1377, Richard was crowned in Westminster Abbey. The ceremony was unusually splendid, but the fatigue and excitement were too much for the royal boy, who, after being anointed and crowned, was so completely exhausted that they were obliged to carry him in a litter to his apartment. After some rest he was summoned to the great hall, where he created four earls and nine knights, and partook of a magnificent banquet, which was followed by a ball, minstrelsy, and other somewhat turbulent festivities of the time. Considerable pains were taken to spoil this young king from the first; such adulation and prostrations had not been seen before in England; and if the bishops and courtiers did not preach to the boy the "divine right," they seem to have made a near approach to that doctrine; and they spoke gravely of the intuitive wisdom and of the heroism of a child not yet eleven years old.

These men were indisputably answerable for much of the mischief that followed; but now the beauty of the young king's person and the memory of his father endeared him to his people, and a long time passed before they would think any ill of the son of their idol, the Black Prince. The duke of Lancaster, the titular king of Castile, more popularly known under the name of John of Gaunt,[1] had long been suspected of the project of supplanting his

[1 John, duke of Lancaster, the fourth son of Edward III, and the eldest one that survived him, took his name, John of Gaunt, from his birthplace, Ghent or Gand, then pronounced Gaunt. Gairdner *a* says of him that he was "a man whose inward endowments, either of virtue or discretion, by no means corresponded with his artificial greatness."]

nephew; but his unpopularity was great, and he yielded with tolerably good grace to the force of circumstances. As if on purpose to exclude the duke, no regular regency was appointed; but the morning after the coronation the prelates and barons chose, "in aid of the chancellor and treasurer," twelve permanent councillors, among whom not one of the king's uncles was named. John of Gaunt withdrew to his castle of Kenilworth; but nothing could remove the popular belief that the duke aimed at the throne, and prophecies were afloat which, like other such predictions, probably helped to work their own fulfilment a few years later, when his son, Henry of Bolingbroke, dethroned his cousin Richard.

The French were not slow in trying to take the usual advantage of a minority. The truce expired before the death of Edward, and Charles refused to prolong it. In close union with Henry of Trastamara, who was provoked by the duke of Lancaster's continuing to assume the title of king of Castile, he got together a formidable fleet, and insulted and plundered the English coast, before Richard had been a month on the throne. A parliament[1] was assembled whilst the impression of these injuries was fresh; and in order to obtain supplies of money (the treasury being exhausted) it was stated that the realm was in greater danger than it had ever been. Supplies were voted, and, by borrowing greater sums of the merchants, government was enabled to put to sea a considerable fleet under the command of the earl of Buckingham, one of the duke of Lancaster's brothers. Buckingham met with little success, and his failure, however unfairly, added to the unpopularity of the Lancastrian party.

John of Gaunt, however, obtained the command of the fleet (1378), with nearly all the money which had been voted. He detached a squadron under the earls of Arundel and Salisbury, who, in crossing the Channel, fell in with a Spanish fleet, and suffered considerable loss. The two earls, however, succeeded in their main object, and took possession of the town and port of Cherbourg, on the coast of Normandy, which were ceded to England by the king of Navarre, who was again engaged in a war with the French king, and who was glad to purchase the assistance of England at any price. In the month of July the duke sailed with the great fleet for the coast of Brittany, where the conquests of the French had reduced another ally of England almost to despair. The duke of Brittany, son of the heroic countess de Montfort, ceded to the English the important town and harbour of Brest, which Lancaster secured with a good garrison. The duke then invested St. Malo, but the constable Du Guesclin marched with a very superior force to the relief of that place, and compelled the duke to return to his ships. The great fleet then came home.

A striking circumstance which had occurred did not tend to brighten the duke's laurels. The Scots, receiving their impulse from France, renewed the war, surprised the castle of Berwick, made incursions into the northern counties, and equipped a number of ships to cruise against the English. Berwick was recovered soon after by the earl of Northumberland; but one John Mercer, who had got together certain sail of Scots, French, and Spaniards, came to Scarborough, and made prize of every ship in that port. Upon learning the injuries done, and the still greater damage apprehended from these sea-rovers, John Philpot—"that worshipful citizen of London"—lamenting the negligence of government, equipped a small fleet at his own expense, and, without waiting for any commission, went in pursuit of Mercer. After a fierce

[1 Before the end of this session of parliament Alice Perrers, Edward III's mistress, was arrested, charged with having solicited causes in the king's courts for reward. She was tried before a committee of the lords, found guilty, and banished.]

[1378–1379 A.D.]

battle, the doughty alderman took the Scot prisoner, captured fifteen Spanish ships, and recovered all the vessels which had been taken at Scarborough. On his return, Philpot was received in triumph by his fellow-citizens, but he was harshly handled by the council of government for the unlawfulness of acting as he had done without authority, he being but a private man.

In the month of October, 1378, the parliament met at Gloucester, and in a very bad humour; the government wanted money—the commons a reform of abuses. The disputes ended in a compromise, the commons being allowed to inspect the accounts of the treasurers, which was granted as a matter of favour, but not of right, nor were they to consider it as a precedent: they also obtained copies of the papers, showing how the moneys they had voted had been raised; but this also was granted as if proceeding from the king's good pleasure. In the end they granted a new aid by laying additional duties on wool, wool-fells, hides, leather, and other merchandise.

RICHARD II
(1366–1400)

John de Montfort, the duke of Brittany, had been driven to seek refuge in England, and the French king annexed his dominions to the crown of France. This premature measure reconciled all the factions in the country; and John was recalled by the unanimous voice of the Bretons. Leaving his wife, an aunt of King Richard,[1] in England, he embarked with one hundred knights and men-at-arms, and two hundred archers. Charles instantly prepared to send a French army into Brittany, and then the duke implored the assistance of a force from England. A considerable army was raised and sent to his relief, under the command of the earl of Buckingham.

Buckingham landed at Calais, and from Calais he marched to Artois, Picardy, Champagne, and other inland provinces of France, plundering and devastating the open country. His progress was watched by far superior forces; but, firm to the system which the cautious Charles had adopted, the French would not risk a battle, and the English, after a circuitous march, reached the frontiers of Brittany without meeting any resistance. But the earl of Buckingham was scarcely there when the king of France died, and the Bretons, who knew that a boy was to ascend the throne, thinking that they should no longer stand in need of their assistance, began to entertain as much jealousy and hatred of the English as they had hitherto done of the French. Montfort was unable to resist the wishes of his subjects; and as the uncles of the young king Charles VI, who formed the regency, were willing to treat and to recognise his restoration, he concluded a peace with France, and engaged wholly to abandon the interests of England. Buckingham returned home in the following spring, glad to escape from the hostility of the Bretons.

[1] Montfort married Mary, the fourth daughter of Edward III and Queen Philippa.

POPULAR DISCONTENT

These proceedings had cost large sums of money, and the nation was sorely harassed by taxation, or by the way in which the taxes were levied. In an evil hour parliament passed a capitation tax: this was a repetition of the tax imposed in the last year of the preceding reign, but slightly modified, so as to make it fall less heavily on the poor. Every male and female of fifteen years of age was to pay three groats; but in cities and towns the aggregate amount was to be divided among the inhabitants according to their abilities, or in such a way that no individual should pay less than one groat, or more than sixty groats for himself and his wife. Where there was little or no registration, the fixing of the age was sure to lead to disputes: the collectors might easily take a boy or girl of fourteen to be fifteen, and poverty would induce many of the poor knowingly to make a misstatement of the opposite kind. But the levying of this awkward tax might have passed over with nothing more serious than a few riots between the people and the tax-gatherers, had it not been for other circumstances involved in the mighty change which had gradually been taking place in the whole body of European society.

The peasantry had been gradually emerging from slavery to freedom, and began to feel an ambition to become men, and to be treated as such by their superiors in the accidental circumstances of rank and wealth. In this transition state there were mistakes and atrocious crimes committed by both parties; but ignorance may be particularly pleaded in exculpation of the people, while that very ignorance, and the brutalised state in which they had been kept, were crimes or mistakes on the part of the upper classes, who had now to pay a horrible penalty. The enfranchisement of the peasantry, which was the real motive of the movement—for the rest was an afterthought, begotten in the madness of success, and the frenzy inspired in unenlightened minds by the first consciousness of power—was so sacred an object that nothing could disgrace or eventually defeat it. In Flanders, notwithstanding that there the more respectable burghers took a share in the insurrection, many frightful excesses had been committed upon the aristocracy, and in France the recent *Jacquerie* had been little else than a series of horrors. The attempt of the French peasantry offered a discouraging example to their neighbours in England; but the democratic party had had a long triumph in Flanders; and at this very moment the son of Van Artevelde, the brewer of Ghent, with Peter Dubois, was waging a successful war against their court, their nobles, and the whole aristocracy of France.

From the close intercourse between the two countries, many of the English must have been perfectly acquainted with all that was passing in Flanders, and from it have derived encouragement. A new revolt had also commenced in France, headed by the burghers and inhabitants of the towns; it began at Rouen, where the collectors of taxes and duties on provisions were massacred. Many of our historians have attributed part of the storm which was now gathering in England to the preaching of Wycliffe's disciples; but their original authorities seem to have been prejudiced witnesses against the church reformer. The convulsion is sufficiently accounted for by the actual condition of the people of England at this period. That condition, though far superior to the state of the French people, was still wretched and galling. A considerable portion of the peasantry were serfs or "villeins," bound to the soil, and sold, or transmitted with the estates of the nobles and other landed proprietors. The present discontents and sufferings of the classes immediately above these

serfs—the poor townspeople on the coast, more particularly, who had been plundered by the foreign fleets—no doubt contributed to hurry on the sanguinary crisis; but it was the poll-tax that was the proximate cause of the mischief. At first the tax was levied with mildness; but being farmed out to some courtiers who raised money upon it from Flemish and Lombard merchants, it was exacted by their collectors with great severity. But the obstinacy of the people kept pace with the harshness of the collectors; many of the rural districts refused payment.

THE UPRISINGS IN KENT AND ESSEX

The recusants were handled very sorely and uncourteously in various places in Kent and Essex, where "some of the people, taking it in evil part, secretly took counsel together, gathered assistance, and resisted the exactors, rising against them, of whom some they slew, some they wounded, and the rest fled." Alarmed at these proceedings, government sent certain commissioners into the disturbed districts. One of these commissioners, Thomas de Bampton, sat at Brentwood, in Essex. The people of Fobbing, on being summoned before him, said that they would not pay one penny more than they had done, "whereupon the said Thomas did grievously threaten them, having with him two sergeants-at-arms of the king." These threats made matters worse; and when Bampton ordered his sergeants to arrest them, the peasants drove him and his men-at-arms away to London.

Upon this Sir Robert Belknape, chief justice of the common pleas, was sent into Essex to try the offenders; but the peasants forced him to flee, and chopped off the heads of the jurors and clerks of the commission. They stuck these heads upon poles and carried them through all the neighbouring townships and villages, calling upon all the poor to rise and join them. "The commons of England" (for so the peasants called themselves, and were called by others) wanted nothing but a leader, and this they soon found in a "riotous priest," who took the name of Jack Straw. In a few days, not only the whole agricultural population of Essex were up in arms, but their neighbours in Kent, Suffolk, and Norfolk were following the example. In Kent, an act of brutality on the part of a tax-gatherer, and an act of great imprudence (considering the prevailing excitement) on the part of a knight, fanned the flames of revolt.

One of the collectors of the poll-money went to the house of one Walter the Tyler, in the town of Dartford, and demanded the tax for a young maiden, the daughter of Walter.[1] The mother maintained that she was but a child, and not of the womanly age set down by the act of parliament: the collector said he would ascertain this fact, and he offered an intolerable insult to the girl. The maiden and her mother cried out, and the father ran to the spot and knocked out the tax-gatherer's brains. The neighbours applauded the deed, and everyone prepared to support the Tyler. About the same time, Sir Simon Burley went to Gravesend with an armed force, claimed an industrious man living in that town as his escaped bondsman, and carried him off a prisoner to Rochester castle. The commons of Kent now rose unanimously, and

[1 Most of the earlier historians, as the writer here does, have identified Wat Tyler, or Wat the Tyler, the leader of the peasant revolt, with the tiler of Dartford whose killing of the royal tax collector for an insult to his daughter was one of the incidents that led to the outbreak. But there is apparently no reason for this identification of the two men other than the fact that they both plied the same trade. Gairdner *a* does not believe them to be one and the same.]

being joined by a strong body of the men of Essex, who crossed the Thames, they fell upon Rochester castle, and compelled the garrison to deliver up Sir Simon's serf with other prisoners. In the town of Maidstone, the insurgents appointed Wat the Tyler their captain, and then took out of prison, and had for their chaplain or preacher, "a wicked priest called John Ball," at that time confined on a charge of heresy.[1]

On the Monday after Trinity Sunday, 1381, Wat Tyler entered Canterbury, and after terrifying the monks and the clergy of the cathedral, he forced the mayor, aldermen, and commons of the town to swear to be true to King Richard and the lawful commons of England: then, beheading three rich men of Canterbury, Wat marched away towards London. On his march recruits came to him from all quarters of Kent and Sussex; and by the time he reached Blackheath (June 11th) there were, it is said, one hundred thousand desperate men obeying the orders of Wat Tyler. While at this spot the widow of the Black Prince, the young king's mother, fell into their hands; but in the midst of their fury they respected her, and after granting a few kisses to some dirty-faced and rough-bearded men she was allowed, with her retinue and maids of honour, to proceed quietly to London.

While this host was bivouacked about Blackheath and Greenwich, John Ball, the priest of Kent, kept them to their purpose by long orations or sermons, in which he insisted that all men were equal before God, and ought to be so before the laws—and so far he was right; but it appears he went on to recommend an equality of property, which is impracticable, and a destruction of all the upper classes, which is monstrous. His eloquence had such an effect on the multitude that, forgetting his own doctrines of equality, they vowed they would make him primate and chancellor of England. They occupied all the roads, killed such judges and lawyers as fell into their hands,[2] and made all the rest of the passengers swear to be true to King Richard and the commons, to accept no king whose name was "John" [referring to the influence of Lancaster], and to pay no tax except the fifteenths which had been paid by their forefathers. The young king, with his mother, with his cousin Henry of Bolingbroke, with Simon Sudbury, archbishop of Canterbury and chancellor, Sir Robert Hales, treasurer, and some other members of the government, threw himself into the Tower of London. The duke of Lancaster was in Scotland negotiating a peace. Some of the council were of opinion that Richard should go and speak with the insurgents, but the archbishop and the treasurer strongly objected to this measure, and said that nothing but force should be used "to abate the pride of such vile rascals."

On the 12th of June, however, Richard got into his barge, and descended the river as far as Rotherhithe, where he found a vast multitude drawn up along shore. "When they perceived the king's barge," says Froissart,[d] "they set up shouts and cries as if all the devils from hell had come into their com-

[1 Ball's theory of democracy was expressed in the delightful little couplet which he is said to have used as a text for his sermons:

When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?]

[2 Walsingham[c] tells us that Wat Tyler's plans provided, as a first step towards correcting the evils of the time, the beheading of all the lawyers in the country, "for he had taken it into his head that, on all those learned in the laws being killed, everything for the rest would be regulated according to the decree of the commonalty." Lord Campbell[f] points out that the same spirit manifested itself in Cade's rebellion in the reign of Henry VI. Shakespeare (*Henry VI, Part II*) makes one of Cade's lieutenants say, "The first thing we do let's kill all the lawyers." As late as the Gordon riots (1780) the mob laid siege to the inns of court, declaring that if all the lawyers were exterminated "the skin of an innocent lamb might no longer be converted into an indictment."]

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pany." Startled and terrified, the persons with the king put about the boat, and, taking advantage of the rising tide, rowed back with all speed to the Tower. The commons, who had always professed the greatest attachment to Richard's person, now called aloud for the heads of all the ministers; and marching along the right bank of the river to Southwark, and then to Lambeth, destroyed the Marshalsea and King's Bench, and burned the furniture and all the records and books in the palace of the primate. At the same time the men of Essex advanced along the left bank of the river, and threatened the northeastern part of London. Walworth, the mayor, caused the movable part of London bridge to be drawn up, to prevent the men of Kent from crossing the river; but on the following day a passage was yielded to them through fear, and the insurgents entered the city, where they were presently joined by all the rabble. At first their demeanour was most moderate; "they did no hurt, they took nothing from any man, but bought all things they wanted at a just price." But the madness of drunkenness was soon added to political fury. The rich citizens, hoping to conciliate the mob, had set open their wine cellars for them; and, thus excited, they went to the Savoy, the house of the duke of Lancaster, broke into this palace, and set fire to it. To show that plunder was not their object, the leaders published a proclamation ordering that none, on pain of death, should secrete or convert to his own use anything that might be found there, but that plate, gold, and jewels should all be destroyed. It would have been well had the prohibition extended to the duke's wines, but they drank there immoderately, and thirty-two of the rioters, engaged in the cellars of the Savoy, were too drunk to remove in time, and were buried under the ruins of the house.

Newgate was then demolished; and the prisoners who had been confined there and in the Fleet joined in the work of havoc. The Temple was burned, with all the books and ancient and valuable records it contained; and about the same time a detachment set fire to the priory of St. John of Jerusalem, in Clerkenwell. They now also proceeded to the shedding of blood. They probably felt that antipathy to foreigners common to uneducated people; but against the Flemings, who, it was popularly said, fattened on their miseries, they bore the most deadly rancour. The sanctuary of the church was disregarded, and thirty Flemings were dragged from the altar into the streets, and beheaded; thirty-two more were seized in the Vintry, and underwent the same fate. Some of the rich citizens were massacred in attempting to escape; those who remained did nothing for the defence of the city, and all that night London was involved in fire, murder, and debauchery.

On the morning of the 14th it was resolved to try the effect of concession and of promises. A proclamation was issued to a multitude that crowded Tower Hill, clamouring for the heads of the chancellor and treasurer; and they were told that, if they would retire quietly to Mile End, the king would meet them there, and grant all their requests. The gates were opened, the drawbridge was lowered, and Richard rode forth with a few attendants without arms. The commonalty from the country followed the king; "but all did not go, nor had they the same objects in view." On arriving at Mile End, Richard was surrounded by upwards of sixty thousand peasants; but their demeanour was mild and respectful, and they presented no more than four demands, all of which, except the second, were wise and moderate. These four demands of the peasants were: (1) The total abolition of slavery for themselves and their children forever; (2) the reduction of the rent of good land to fourpence the acre; (3) the full liberty of buying and selling, like other men, in all fairs and markets; (4) a general pardon for all past offences.

The king, with a gracious countenance, assured them that all these demands were granted; and, returning to town, he employed upwards of thirty clerks to make copies of the charter containing the four clauses. In the morning these copies were sealed and delivered, and then an immense body of the insurgents, consisting chiefly of the men of Essex and Hertfordshire, quietly withdrew from the capital: but more dangerous men remained behind. The people of Kent, who had been joined by all kinds of miscreants, had committed some atrocious deeds on the preceding day, while the king was marching to Mile End. Almost as soon as his back was turned, with a facility which excites a suspicion of treachery or disaffection on the part of the garrison, they got into the Tower, where they cut off the heads of the archbishop of Canterbury, the chancellor; Sir Robert Hales, the treasurer; William Apuldore, the king's confessor; Legge, one of the farmers of the tax, and three of his associates. The widow of the Black Prince, who was in the Tower, was completely at their mercy; but the *ci-devant* "Fair Maid of Kent" was again quit for a few unsavoury kisses. The horror of the scene, however, overpowered her; and she was carried by her ladies in a senseless state to a covered boat. As soon as he could, the king joined his mother, who had been finally conveyed to a house called the Royal Wardrobe.

Death of Wat Tyler

Wat Tyler and the leaders with him rejected the charter which the men of Essex had so gladly accepted. Another charter was drawn up, but it equally failed to please, and even a third, with still larger concessions, was rejected with contempt. The next morning the king left the Wardrobe and went to Westminster, where he heard mass. After this he mounted his horse, and, with a retinue of barons and knights, rode along the "causeway" towards London. On coming into West Smithfield he met Wat Tyler. The mayor and some other city magistrates had joined the king, but his whole company, it is said, did not exceed sixty persons. In the front of the abbey of St. Bartholomew, Richard drew rein, and said that he would not go thence until he had appeased the rioters. Wat Tyler said to his men, "Here is the king! I will go speak with him. Move not hand or foot unless I give you a signal." Wat, who had procured arms and a horse, rode boldly up to Richard, and went so near that his horse's head touched the flank of Richard's steed. "King!" said he, "dost thou see all those men there?" "I see them," replied the king; "why dost thou ask?" "Because they are all at my will, and have sworn by their faith and loyalty to do whatsoever I bid them." During this parley the Tyler played with his dagger, and, it is said by some, laid hold of Richard's bridle.

It is probable that this uneducated man, intoxicated by his brief authority, was coarse and insolent enough; but to suppose that he intended to kill the king is absurd. Some say that Richard ordered his arrest; others that William Walworth, the lord mayor, thinking that he intended to stab the king, rode up and plunged a short sword into his throat without any orders. All accounts agree in stating that, whether with sword, dagger, or mace, it was the mayor who struck the first blow. Wat Tyler turned his horse's head to rejoin his men, but Ralph Standish, one of the king's esquires, thrust his sword through his side, "so that he fell flat on his back to the ground; and, beating with his hands to and fro for a while, gave up his unhappy ghost." When the men of Kent saw his fall they cried out, "We are betrayed! They have killed our captain and guide!" and the foremost men in that disordered

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array began to put their arrows on the string. The personal intrepidity of the royal boy—for Richard was only in his fifteenth year—saved his life. He rode gallantly up to the insurgents and exclaimed, "What are ye doing, my lieges? Tyler was a traitor—I am your king, and I will be your captain and guide." On hearing these words, many slipped away—others remained; but, without a leader, they knew not what to do. The king rode back to his lords, and asked what steps he should take next. "Make for the fields," said the lord mayor: "if we attempt to retreat or flee, our ruin is certain; but let us gain a little time, and we shall be assisted by our good friends in the city." The king and his party made for the northern road, and the mob, wavering and uncertain, followed him to the open fields about Islington. Here a thousand men-at-arms joined the king, under the command of Sir Robert Knolles. The insurgents, now thinking their case hopeless, either ran away through the corn-fields, or, throwing their bows on the ground, knelt and implored for mercy.

TIME OF RICHARD II

While these events were passing in London and its neighbourhood, the servile war had spread over a great part of England; but, as the nobles shut themselves up in their strong castles, little blood was shed. Henry le Despenser, the bishop of Norwich, despised this safe course; he armed his retainers, collected his friends, and kept the field against the insurgents of Norfolk, Cambridge, and Huntingdon. He surprised several bodies of peasants, and cut them to pieces: others he took prisoners, and sent straight to the gibbet or the block.

Soon after the death of Wat Tyler, Richard found himself at the head of forty thousand horse, and then he told the people that all his charters meant nothing, and that they must return to their old bondage. The men of Essex made a stand, but they were defeated with great loss. Then courts of commission were opened in different towns to condemn rather than to try the chief offenders. Jack Straw and John Ball, the strolling preachers, Lister, and Westbroom, who had taken to themselves the titles of kings of the commons in Norfolk and Suffolk, with several hundred more, were executed. The whole number of executions is said to have amounted to fifteen hundred.

When parliament assembled, it was seen how little the upper classes of society were prepared for that recognition of the rights of the poor to which, in the present day, no one could demur without incurring the suspicion of insanity. The king had annulled, by proclamation to the sheriffs, the charters of manumission which he had granted to the insurgents, and this revocation was warmly approved by both lords and commons. There was a talk, indeed, about the propriety and wisdom of abolishing villeinage; but the notion was scouted, and the owners of serfs showed that they neither doubted the right by which they held their fellow-creatures in a state of slavery, nor would hesitate to increase the severity of the laws affecting them. They

passed a law by which "riots, and rumours, and other such things" were turned into high treason. But this parliament evidently acted under the impulses of panic and of revenge for recent injuries. The commons, however, presented petitions calling for redress of abuses in the administration: but they only attributed the late insurrection to the extortions of purveyors —to the venality and rapacity of the judges and officers of the courts of law —to the horrible doings of a set of banditti called "maintainers"—and to the heavy weight of recent taxation.[b]

WYCLIFFE

In all the insurrectionary proceedings which so clearly indicated a condition of society in which those lowest in the social scale met with little consideration and no immediate redress, we cannot perceive—what has been maintained with a confidence very disproportioned to the evidence—that the "theory of property" expounded by Wycliffe was a main cause of this anarchy[1]: that "the new teaching received a practical comment in 1381, in the invasion of London by Wat the Tyler." The assumed connection of the "new doctrine" with the insurrection may be attributed to the hostility with which the Lollard opinions were assailed by the misrepresentations of the apprehensive ecclesiastics and their historians. The agitation of Wycliffe and his followers was coincident with the insurrection of the villeins, but it was not of necessity a cause. Agitation of any kind begets other agitation. But this was not the direct effect which some impute to the dissemination of Wycliffe's tenets.

Within a few months after the accession of Richard II the rector of Lutterworth, in consequence of letters from the pope, was summoned before the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London, to answer for his opinions. He defended his doctrines, and was dismissed, with a direction to be cautious for the future. After the insurrection of 1381 had been quelled, a synod of divines was called, in which many of Wycliffe's opinions were censured as heretical, erroneous, and of dangerous tendency. To follow up their triumph, the prelates procured an act to be passed by the lords to the following effect: That divers evil persons, under the dissimulation of great holiness, go about from county to county, and from town to town, "without the license of our holy father, the pope, or of the ordinaries of the places, or other sufficient authority, preaching daily, not only in churches and churchyards, but also in markets, fairs, and other open places." The sermons so preached, it is alleged, have been proved before the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishops and prelates, and a great part of the clergy, to contain heresies and notorious errors.

Further it is said, "which persons do also preach divers matters of slander, to engender discord and dissension betwixt divers estates of the said realm, as well spiritual as temporal, in exciting of the people, to the great peril of all the realm." The act then directs the sheriffs to hold such preachers and

[1 Freeman [h] points out that one great result of the revolt was to associate in men's minds the two ideas of religious reformation and social or political revolution. "Wycliffe," he says, "was himself as guiltless of the revolt of the villeins as Luther was of the Peasants' War, or of the reign of the anabaptists. But in both cases the teaching of the more moderate reformer had a real connection with the doings of the reformers who outstripped him. From this time Lollardy was under a cloud. It was held to be all one, not only with heresy but with revolution."[a]]

their abettors "in arrest and strong prison, till they will justify themselves according to the law and reason of holy church." This victory over the "poor preachers" was very short-lived. Wycliffe petitioned against the act. The commons represented that it had been passed without their consent. It was immediately repealed; and we hear nothing more in the legislative records about preachers of heresies, till, eighteen years afterwards, a law was passed to burn them. To us it appears manifest that, in repealing this act, the parliament asserted its conviction that the heresies, the notorious errors, the matters of slander, which were preached in open places, had solely reference to the alleged corruptions of the church, and that to subject the kingdom to the jurisdiction of the prelates, as the act proposed, was to surrender the civil freedom which their ancestors had maintained. The men who refused to assent to the proposal of the king that slavery should be abolished would have been ready enough to sanction the imprisonment of the preachers of universal equality, if such had been their doctrine. Undoubtedly Wycliffe himself did not hesitate to maintain that the revenues of the church, applied not to the service of the altar by its diligent ministers, but to the upholding of the excessive pride and luxury of prelates and abbots and other "possessioners," were superfluous, and were truly the patrimony of the poor. Wycliffe is also reported to have said, although he attempted to explain his meaning away, that "charters of perpetual inheritance were impossible." In contending that the preachers of the Gospel were bound to lead a life of self-denial, like that of their great master, he naturally provoked a fiercer indignation than was excited by his more abstract doctrines regarding the Eucharist and the sacrament of matrimony.

He was at last compelled to submit himself to the judgment of his ordinary, and he withdrew to his rectory. But he had accomplished a work which no ecclesiastical censure could set aside. He had translated the Scriptures into the English language. Whenever he and his disciples were assailed by the higher ecclesiastics, he had appealed to the Bible. His translation of the Bible was now multiplied by the incessant labour of transcribers. The texts of the Bible were in every mouth, as they were re-echoed in the sermons of his preachers, in churches and open places. The poor treasured up the words of comfort for all earthly afflictions. The rich and great meditated upon the inspired sentences which so clearly pointed out a more certain road to salvation than could be found through indulgences and pilgrimages. During the remaining years of the fourteenth century, the principles of the Lollards took the deepest root in the land. Wycliffe died in 1384, but his preaching never died. His Bible was proscribed; his votaries were imprisoned and burned. But the sacred flame was never extinguished. The first English reformer appeared in an age when civil freedom asserted itself with a strength which was never afterwards subdued or materially weakened. He fought a brave fight for religious freedom, with very unequal forces, against a most powerful hierarchy. But such contests are not terminated in a few years. The reforms which in the eternal laws are willed to be permanent are essentially of slow growth. When the "poor preachers" had slept for a century and a half their day of triumph was at hand.

It has been said that of this generation one-third of the English people became Lollards, as the followers of Wycliffe were now termed. The ecclesiastical hierarchy held them as the tares (*lolium*) amongst the wheat. In the next generation began the futile process of attempting to weed out the tares. The gradual reforms by which the ancient state of England was preserved and invigorated were resisted by those who had directed the fortunes of her

ancient church. In the fulness of time it fell—a warning to those who dwell in the edifice reconstructed out of its materials, precious even in their occasional incongruity.

THE BEGINNINGS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

The age in which the "poor preachers" disseminated their opinions was an age in which knowledge began to spread, and literature was to some extent cultivated. The abstract doctrines of the Lollards had been enforced by the satires of "Piers Ploughman"—full not only of sarcasm and invective, but of real poetry. Chaucer had arisen with his various knowledge, his familiarity with courtly and with common life, his acquaintance with the writings of Dante and Petrarch and the Italian fablers. He gave to his native English a copiousness and elegance which it had not previously possessed. He cast aside the use of Latin, which limited literature to the few. He brought his translations and adaptations within the reach of the many. From Boccaccio he borrowed his *Knight's Tale*, "as olde stories tellin us." To this romance he added vigorous descriptions and graceful fictions which are wanting in his model. He invented the English heroic couplet—the fruitful parent of a noble poetical progeny. His *Romaunt of the Rose* is of French origin. His *Troilus and Cresseide*, as he tells us, is from "myne auctor Lollius," an Italian of Urbino. His poems contain frequent allusions to the great Latin writers. *The House of Fame* has not been traced to a distinct origin. *The Canterbury Tales*—with their Arabian fiction and philosophy; their reflections of mediæval splendour and of mediæval injustice as exhibited in the *Clerk of Oxenford's Tale*, which, written by Boccaccio, he learned of Petrarch at Padua; their wonderful pictures of English life, so thoroughly founded upon his own genius and powers of observation—would appear miraculous performances if we were to fall into the common notion that the end of the fourteenth century was an age of ignorance. Ignorance, very gross, no doubt, there was; but the national mind was awake, or such works could never have been produced. They were meant to be popular—and they were popular. Limited in their circulation by the necessary expense of their multiplication in manuscript, they found their way to the noble's privy chamber, the franklin's fireside, and the student's cell.

Most men, with any pretensions to knowledge, had some acquaintance with the novelties of literature and the current European fables. In the inventory under the will of a clerk of Bury, in 1370, we find his service-book, a law book, a book of statutes, and a book of romances. The passion for fiction existed before printing multiplied the possession of works of amusement. The French romances were the courtly reading, before Chaucer and Gower came with their more attractive English. Gower, "the moral Gower," was far inferior in genius to Chaucer. In him that great attribute of genius, humour, was wholly wanting. His *Confessio Amantis*, full indeed of affectations, the pedantry of love, contains many interesting narratives and wise disquisitions. The early writers of fiction, without the creative power which has made Chaucer universal and enduring, used their stories as the vehicle for imparting the most recondite knowledge—and Gower was of this class. But in him we may trace the large range of inquiry that belonged to his time, destitute of scientific exactness, but leading into wide regions of speculation. The demand for poetry and fiction is strikingly exemplified by an incident connected with Gower's *Confessio Amantis*. Richard, the luxurious king, is

in his barge on the Thames. He sees the poet in a boat, and inviting him to come on board desires him to "book some new thing."

When Froissart came to England, in 1394, he brought a French romance to Richard, which he laid ready on the king's bed. "When the king opened it, it pleased him well, for it was fair enlumined and written. Then the king demanded me whereof it treated, and I showed him how it treated matters of love; whereof the king was glad, and looked in it, and read it in many places, for he could speak and read French very well."[d] Froissart's commendation of the king's French shows that English was now commonly read and spoken; and that Chaucer and Gower had adapted themselves to that change which has carried our tongue to the ends of the earth. Upon Wycliffe's Bible our present translation is mainly founded. Sir John Mandeville, in 1356, wrote in English his *Travels*, so full of apocryphal marvels. Trevisa translated the *Polychronicon* of Higden in 1385. From him we learn that, at the time he wrote, gentlemen had "much left off to have their children taught French." The change had been gradually coming, for John Cornwall, a schoolmaster, in 1356 made his boys translate Latin into English. By the end of the fourteenth century the English were a nation, in language as well as in heart.[k]

FLANDERS AND SCOTLAND

The king, being now (1382) in his sixteenth year, was married to Anne of Bohemia, daughter of the late emperor Charles IV, an accomplished and excellent princess, who deserved a better and a wiser husband.

At this time there were two popes, Urban VI, an Italian, and Clement VII, a Frenchman. France, Scotland, Spain, Sicily, and Cyprus were for Clement; England, Flanders, and the rest of Europe for Urban. The Italian pope, after looking about for a brave and sure champion, fixed his eyes on the warlike bishop of Norwich, who had so lately distinguished himself in the servile war of England. At the same time the Flemings, sorely pressed by the French, renewed their applications to England for assistance. After preaching a sort of crusade, the bishop of Norwich asked in the pope's name a tenth on church property, obtained the produce of a fifteenth on lay property, and raised a small army, and so passed over the Channel to make war.

The war in which this military churchman engaged presented two aspects: under one, it was a sacred crusade for the pope; but under the other it was a conflict waged in union with and for the rights and independence of the burghers and commons of Flanders against the aristocracy. After the murder of Jacob van Artevelde, the cause of democracy declined; and thirty-six years after that event the Flemings were reduced almost to extremities. In this state they fixed all their hopes on Van Artevelde's son, who had been named Philip, after his godmother Philippa, the wife of Edward III. Philip van Artevelde, warned by his father's fate, had passed his life in a quiet and happy retirement; and in 1381 he was dragged, with his eyes open to the worst consequences, to head the council and lead the armies of the dispirited people. For about fifteen months, which included the whole of his public life, his career was as brilliant as a romance: but in the month of November, 1382, he was defeated in the sanguinary battle of Roosebeke, and (in this more fortunate than his father) was killed by the enemy. After that dreadful defeat, the cause of the commons again declined.

Affairs were in this state at the arrival of the English force. The bishop of Norwich led his little army to Gravelines, which he stormed and took. He

next defeated an army of the count of Flanders, took the town of Dunkirk, and occupied the whole coast as far as Sluys; he then marched, with an impetuosity which astonished more regular warriors, to lay siege to Ypres, where he was joined by twenty thousand of the men of Ghent. Meanwhile, the count implored the protection of the young king of France, who sent a splendid army across the frontier. The bishop made one furious assault; but, on the approach of the French, he ran back to the coast. In England his failure was attributed to the jealousy of the duke of Lancaster.

In her jealousy of the powers of his uncles, the princess of Wales had surrounded her son with ministers and officers who were chiefly men of obscure birth. Richard, who lived almost entirely in the society of these individuals, contracted an exclusive affection for them, and as soon as he was able he began to heap wealth and honours upon them. Hence there arose perpetual bickerings between the favourites and the king's uncles. A dark mystery will forever hang over most of these transactions. Once the duke of Lancaster was obliged to hide himself in Scotland, and he would not return until Richard publicly proclaimed his conviction of his innocence.

In the month of April of this year, just after the duke had done good service against the Scots, the parliament met at Salisbury. One day during the session John Latimer, a Carmelite friar, a native of Ireland, gave Richard a parchment, containing the particulars of a conspiracy to place the crown on the head of his uncle. The king communicated the contents to Lancaster, who swore that they were all utterly false, and insisted that his accuser should be placed in safe custody to be examined by the council. The monk was accordingly committed to the care of Sir John Holland, the king's half-brother, who is said to have strangled him with his own hands during the night. The lord Zouch, whom the friar had named as the author of the memorial, declared upon his oath that he knew nothing about it, and the matter dropped.

Truces with Scotland were prolonged till the month of May, 1385, when the French sent John de Vienne, lord admiral of France, with a thousand men-at-arms and 40,000 francs in gold, to induce the Scots to make an inroad into England. The French knights soon complained bitterly of the pride of the Scots, the poverty of the land, and the lack of amusements. At last the French and Scots broke into Northumberland; but Richard, who now took the field for the first time, came up from York, and forced them to retire. With eighty thousand men, Richard crossed the borders, burned Edinburgh, Perth, and other towns: but then he was obliged to retreat; for information was brought that John de Vienne had crossed the Solway Firth, and was besieging Carlisle. The French and Scots marched off by the west, and returned towards Edinburgh, boasting that they had done as much mischief in England as the English had done in Scotland.

During this campaign, the royal quarters were disgraced by a vile murder. At York, during the advance, Sir John Holland assassinated one of the favourites, and the grief, shame, and anxiety caused by this event broke the heart of his mother, the princess of Wales, who died a few days after. After the campaign, the king made great promotions to quiet the jealousy of his relations; honours fell upon them, but these were nothing compared to the honours and grants conferred on his own minions. Henry of Bolingbroke, Lancaster's son, was made earl of Derby; the king's uncles, the earls of Cambridge and Buckingham, were created dukes of York and Gloucester. As Richard had no children, he declared that his lawful successor would be Roger, earl of March, grandson of Lionel, duke of Clarence.[b]

[1385-1386 A.D.]

The character of Richard II was now developing itself, and the hopes excited by his remarkable presence of mind in confronting the rioters on Blackheath were rapidly destroyed. Not that he was wanting in capacity, as has been sometimes imagined. For if we measure intellectual power by the greatest exertion it ever displays, rather than by its average results, Richard II was a man of considerable talents. He possessed, along with much dissimulation, a decisive promptitude in seizing the critical moment for action. Of this quality, besides his celebrated behaviour towards the insurgents, he gave striking evidence in several circumstances which we shall have shortly to notice. But his ordinary conduct belied the abilities which on these rare occasions shone forth, and rendered them ineffectual for his security. Extreme pride and violence, with an inordinate partiality for the most worthless favourites, were his predominant characteristics. In the latter quality, and in the events of his reign, he forms a pretty exact parallel to Edward II. Scrope, lord chancellor, who had been appointed in parliament and was understood to be irremovable without its concurrence, lost the great seal for refusing to set it to some prodigal grants. Upon a slight quarrel with Archbishop Courtenay, the king ordered his temporalities to be seized, the execution of which Michael de la Pole, his new chancellor, and a favourite of his own, could hardly prevent. This was accompanied with indecent and outrageous expressions of anger, unworthy of his station and of those whom he insulted.[i]

Soon after these events the duke of Lancaster was enabled to depart, to press his claim to the throne of Castile. A disputed succession in Portugal and a war between that country and Spain seemed to open a road for him. The king was evidently glad to have him out of England. Parliament voted supplies; and in the month of July the duke set sail with an army of ten thousand men. Lancaster landed at Corunna, opened a road through Galicia into Portugal, and formed a junction with the king of that country, who married Philippa, the duke's eldest daughter by his first wife. At first the duke was everywhere victorious; but in a second campaign his army was almost annihilated by disease and famine; and his own declining health forced him to retire to Guienne. In the end, however, he concluded an advantageous treaty. His daughter Catherine, the granddaughter of Pedro the Cruel, was married to Henry, the heir of the reigning king of Castile: 200,000 crowns were paid to the duke for the expenses he had incurred; and the king of Castile agreed to pay 40,000 florins by way of annuity to the duke and duchess of Lancaster. The issue of John of Gaunt reigned in Spain for many generations.

Encouraged by the absence of the duke, the French determined to invade England, and for this purpose upwards of one hundred thousand men, including nearly all the chivalry of France, were encamped in Flanders, and an immense fleet lay in the port of Sluys ready to carry them over. Charles VI, who determined to take a part in the expedition, went to Sluys, and even embarked; but this young king was entirely in the power of his intriguing and turbulent uncles, who seem to have determined (not unwisely, perhaps) that the expedition should not take place, and in the end the army was disbanded. The fleet was dispersed by a tempest, and many of the ships were taken by the English.

THE KING AND GLOUCESTER

Richard gained no increase of comfort by the absence of Lancaster, whose younger brother, the duke of Gloucester, was far harsher than John of Gaunt had ever been. At the meeting of parliament, Gloucester headed an opposition

which determined to drive Richard's favourites, De la Pole and De Vere, from office. They began with De la Pole, who, after a weak attempt of the king to save him, was dismissed. After his expulsion, the commons impeached him of high crimes and misdemeanours, and he was sentenced to pay a heavy fine and to be imprisoned. Gloucester and his party then said that no good government could be expected until a permanent council was chosen by parliament—a council like those which had been appointed in the reigns of John, Henry III, and Edward II. Richard said he would never consent to any such measure. The commons then coolly produced the statute by which Edward II had been deposed; and one of the lords reminded him that his life would be in danger if he persisted in his refusal. Upon this, Richard yielded, and the government was substantially vested for a year in the hands of eleven commissioners, bishops and peers, to whom were added the three great officers of the crown. At the head of all was placed the king's uncle Gloucester.

The king was now twenty years of age, but he was reduced to as mere a cipher as when he was but eleven. In the month of August in the following year, 1387, acting under the advice of De la Pole and Tresilian, the chief justice, he assembled a council at Nottingham, and submitted to some of the judges the question whether the commission of government appointed by parliament, and approved of under his own seal, were legal or illegal. These judges certified under their hands and seals that the commission was illegal, and that all those who introduced the measure were liable to capital punishment. On the 11th of November following, the king, who had returned to London, was alarmed by the intelligence that his uncle Gloucester, and the earls of Arundel and Nottingham, the constable, admiral, and marshal of England, were approaching the capital with forty thousand men. The decision of the judges had been kept secret, but one of the number betrayed it to a friend of Gloucester. As soon as Richard's cousin, the earl of Derby, Lancaster's son and heir, learned of the approach of his uncle Gloucester, he quitted the court, went to Waltham Cross, and there joined him. The members of the council of eleven were there already.

On Sunday, the 17th of November, the duke entered London with an irresistible force, and "appealed" of treason the archbishop of York, De Vere, now duke of Ireland, De la Pole, earl of Suffolk, Robert Tresilian, chief justice, and Sir Nicholas Brember, knight, and lord mayor of London. The favourites instantly took to flight. De la Pole, the condemned chancellor, who had returned to court, succeeded in reaching France, where he died soon after; De Vere, the duke of Ireland, got to the borders of Wales, where he received royal letters, authorising him to raise an army and begin a civil war. He collected a few thousand men, but was met near Radcot, and thoroughly defeated by Gloucester and Henry of Bolingbroke. He then fled to Ireland, and afterwards to Holland, where he died. The archbishop of York was seized in the north, but was allowed by the people to escape: he also finished his days not long after in the humble condition of a parish priest in Flanders. After the defeat of his army under De Vere, Richard lost all heart, and retired into the Tower. His uncle Gloucester, who believed on pretty good grounds that the king and the favourites had intended to put him to death, showed little mercy. He drove every friend of Richard away from the court, and threw some ten or twelve of them into prison. The "merciless parliament," which met in the beginning of the year 1388, carried out the impeachments. The five obnoxious councillors were found guilty of high treason, their property was confiscated, and Tresilian and Brember, the mayor, were executed, to the joy of the people.

The judges who had signed and sealed the answer at Nottingham were next impeached. Their only plea was that they had acted under terror of the king and the favourites: they were capitally convicted; but the bishops interceded in their behalf, and, instead of being sent to the scaffold, they were sent into exile for life in Ireland. Blake, however, who had drawn up the questions at Nottingham, was executed, and so was Usk, who had been secretly appointed under-sheriff to seize the person of the duke of Gloucester. The king's confessor, who swore that no threats had been used with the judges at Nottingham, was also condemned to exile in Ireland. It was hoped that the shedding of blood would stop here, but such was not the intention of Gloucester. After the Easter recess he impeached four knights, and these unfortunate men were all convicted and executed.

For about twelve months Richard left the whole power of government in the hands of his uncle and of the council or commission. It was during this interval that the battle of Otterburn, famous in song under the name of Chevy Chase, was fought (August 15, 1388) between the Scottish earl Douglas and the lord Henry Percy, the renowned Hotspur [as fully described in the history of Scotland]. Douglas was slain, but the English were in the end driven from the field, after both Hotspur and his brother, Lord Ralph Percy, had been taken prisoners. At length Richard gave a proof of that decisive promptitude which visited his mind at uncertain intervals. In a great council held in the month of May, 1389, he suddenly addressed his uncle—"How old do you think I am?" "Your highness," replied Gloucester, "is in your twenty-second year." "Then," added the king, "I am surely of age to manage my own affairs. I have been longer under the control of guardians than any ward in my dominions. I thank ye, my lords, for your past services, but I want them no longer." Before they could recover from their astonishment he demanded the great seals from the archbishop, and the keys of the exchequer from the bishop of Hereford; and within a few days he drove Gloucester from the council without meeting with any opposition. The chief administration of affairs was, however, left to another uncle, the duke of York, and to his cool-headed and calculating cousin, Henry of Bolingbroke.

Lancaster returned from the Continent after an absence of more than three years, and, from circumstances with which we are not sufficiently acquainted, he became all at once exceedingly moderate and popular. He conducted his brother Gloucester and the nobles of his party to court, where an affecting reconciliation took place. The duke was readmitted into the council; Lancaster was created duke of Aquitaine for life, and intrusted with the negotiation of a peace with France. A truce was concluded for four years. This truce also embraced Scotland, the king of which country, Robert II, had died the 19th of April, 1390, leaving the crown to his eldest son John, earl of Carrick, who took the name of Robert III.

THE MURDER OF GLOUCESTER

After the death of "the good Queen Anne"—as Richard's wife had long been called by the English people—which happened at Sheen, on Whitsunday (1394), the king collected a considerable army, and crossed over to Ireland, where the native chiefs had been for some time making head against the English, and where some of the English themselves had revolted. This campaign was a bloodless one: the Irish chiefs submitted; Richard entertained them with great magnificence, knighted some of them, and, after spending a

winter in the country and redressing some abuses, he returned home, and was well received by his subjects.

Although the council was divided on the matter, Richard at last decided on contracting a matrimonial alliance with France; and in the month of October, 1396, he passed over to the Continent and married Isabella, the daughter of Charles VI—a princess who, according to Froissart,[d] was a miracle of beauty and of wit, but who was little more than seven years old. The blessing of a peace, or at least of a truce, for twenty-five years, was the consequence of this union, and yet the marriage was decidedly unpopular in England. The duke of Gloucester had always opposed it. It is said that the duke's declamations were the more vehement, because he suspected what would follow to himself; and it is certain that Richard asked assistance from Charles VI, to be given in case of need, and that this alliance with France gave him courage to undertake a scheme which his deep revenge had nourished for many years. The year after his marriage, in the month of July, Richard struck his blow with consummate treachery. After entertaining him at dinner, in his usual bland manner, he arrested the earl of Warwick. Two days after, he induced the primate to bring his brother, the earl of Arundel, to a friendly conference; and then Arundel was arrested. He had thus got two of his victims: to entrap the third, and the greatest of all, he went with a gay company to Pleshey castle, in Essex, where his uncle Gloucester was residing with his family. The duke, suspecting no mischief, came out to meet the royal guest, and, while Richard entertained the duchess with friendly discourse, Gloucester was seized by the earl marshal, carried with breathless speed to the river, put on board ship, and conveyed to Calais. A few days after, Richard went to Nottingham castle, and there, taking his uncles Lancaster and York, and his cousin, Henry of Bolingbroke, by surprise, he made them, with other noblemen, put their seals to a parchment, by which Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick were "appealed" of treason in the same manner that they had appealed the king's favourites ten years before. A parliament was then summoned to try the three traitors, for so they were now called by men like Henry of Bolingbroke, who had been partakers in all their acts, and by others who had supported them in their boldest measures.

On the 17th of September, Richard went to parliament with six hundred men-at-arms, and a bodyguard of archers. The commons, who had received their lesson, began by impeaching Thomas Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, of high treason. Fearing the primate's eloquence, Richard artfully prevented his attending in the lords, and he was, at the king's will, banished for life. On the following day, his brother, the earl of Arundel, was condemned and beheaded on Tower Hill. On the 21st of September, a writ was issued to the earl marshal, governor of Calais, commanding him to bring the body of his prisoner, the duke of Gloucester, before the king in parliament. On the 24th (and three days were probably then scarcely enough for a king's messenger to travel to Calais and back) an answer was returned to the lords that the earl marshal could not produce the duke, for that he, being in custody in the king's prison in Calais, had died there.[b]

His body was granted to his widow, to be interred with the due honours: masses were appointed to be performed for his soul; and the parliament seems to have been contented with an account of his death, more summary and vague than would have been required in the case of the humblest subject.[e] "As I was informed," says Froissart,[d] "when he had dined, and was about to have washen his hands, there came into the chamber four men, and cast suddenly a towel about the duke's neck, and drew so sore that he fell to the

[1397 A.D.]

earth, and so they strangled him, and closed his eyes; and when he was dead they despoiled him, and bare him to his bed, and laid him between the sheets naked, and then they issued out of the chamber into the hall, and said openly how a palsy had taken the duke of Gloucester, and so he died. These words were abroad in the town of Calais: some believed them, some not."

The lords appellants demanded judgment; the commons seconded their demand, and the dead duke was declared to be a traitor, and all his property was confiscated to the king. On the next day a document purporting to be Gloucester's confession, taken by Sir William Rickhill, one of the justices who had been sent over to Calais in the preceding month for that sole purpose, as was pretended, was produced and read in parliament.[1] On the 28th, Gloucester's friend, the earl of Warwick, was brought before the bar of the house: the earl pleaded guilty, but his sentence was commuted into perpetual imprisonment in the Isle of Man. In passing sentence on these nobles, there were many who condemned themselves. After their recent experience of the king, nothing but fatuity could make them repose confidence in any of his assurances, or in the steadiness of parliament; but, for want of any better security, they extracted from Richard a declaration of their own innocence in regard to all past transactions. This declaration was made in full parliament. After this the king, who was very fond of high-sounding titles, made several promotions of his nobles. Among these, his cousin Henry Bolingbroke was created duke of Hereford.

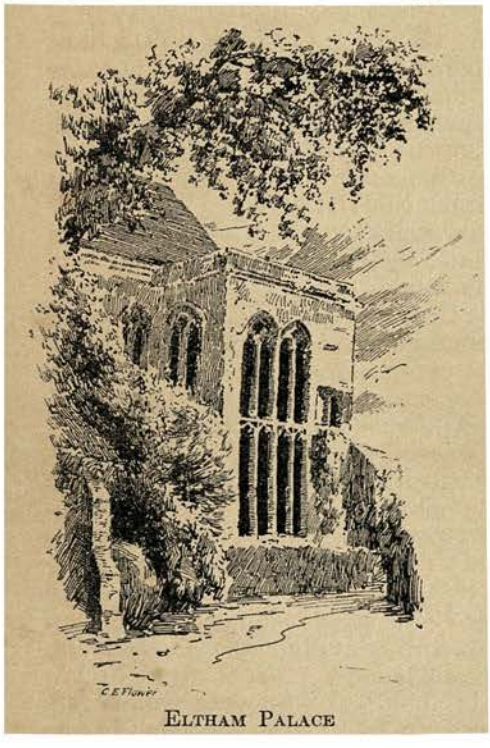
RICHARD'S MISRULE AND DEPOSITION

Gloucester's "merciless" parliament of 1388 had taken an oath that nothing there passed into law should be changed or abrogated; and now the very same men, with a few exceptions, took the same oath to the decisions of the present parliament, which undid all that was then done. The answers of the judges to the questions put at Nottingham, which had then been punished as acts of high treason, were now pronounced to be just and legal. It was declared high treason to attempt to repeal or overturn any judgment now passed; and the issue male of all the persons who had been condemned were declared forever incapable of sitting in parliament or holding office in council. "These violent ordinances, as if the precedent they were then overturning had not shielded itself with the same sanction, were sworn to by parliament upon the cross of Canterbury, and confirmed by a national oath, with the penalty of excommunication denounced against its infringers."

Before this obsequious parliament separated, it set the dangerous precedent of granting the king a subsidy, for life, upon wool; and a commission was granted for twelve peers and six commoners to sit after the dissolution, and examine and determine certain matters as to them should seem best. These eighteen commissioners usurped the entire rights of the legislature: they imposed a perpetual oath on prelates and lords, to be taken before obtaining possession of their estates, that they would maintain the statutes and ordinances made by this parliament, or afterwards by the lords and knights having power committed to them by the same; and they declared it to be

[1] Rickhill saw the duke alive at Calais on the 7th of September. The real object of his mission and the real circumstances of Gloucester's death are involved in a mystery never likely to be cleared up. But it seems that the universal impression, not only in England but also on the Continent, was correct, and that he was secretly murdered, and in a manner not to disfigure the corpse, which was afterwards delivered to his family.

high treason to disobey any of their ordinances. Thus, with the vote of a revenue for life, and with the power of parliament notoriously usurped by a junto of his creatures, Richard became as absolute as he could wish. "In those days," says Froissart,[d] "there was none so great in England that durst speak against anything that the king did. He had a council suitable to his fancies, who exhorted him to do what he list: he kept in his wages ten thousand archers, who watched over him day and night." This high and absolute bearing was, however, of short duration. The people were soon disgusted with Richard, who appeared only to crave power and money that he might lavish them on his minions, and indulge himself in an indolent and luxurious life.


ELTHAM PALACE

A general murmur was soon raised against the late parliament: people said that it had not been freely chosen; that it had with bad faith and barbarity revoked former pardons and connived at illegal exactions; that it had been a party to the shameful impunity of the murderers of Gloucester; and that it had assisted the king in destroying the liberties of the kingdom. Matters were approaching this state when the mutual distrusts of two great noblemen, and the fears they both entertained of the cunning and vindictive spirit of the king, hurried on the catastrophe. Henry of Bolingbroke, now duke of Hereford, and Mowbray, now duke of Norfolk, were the only two that remained of the five appellants of 1386. To all outward appearance they enjoyed the favour and confidence of the king; but they both knew that their original sin had never been forgiven. The duke of Norfolk seems to have been the more alarmed or the more communicative of the two. Overtaking the duke of Hereford, who was riding on the road between Windsor and London in the month of December, during the recess of parliament, Mowbray said, "We are about to be ruined." Henry of Bolingbroke asked, "For what?" and Mowbray said, "For the affair of Radcot bridge." "How can that be after this pardon and declaration in parliament?" "He will annul that pardon," said Mowbray, "and our fate will be like that of others before us." And then he went on to assure Hereford that there was no trust to be put in Richard's promises or oaths, or demonstrations of affection; and that he knew of a certainty that he and his minions were then compassing the deaths of the dukes of Lancaster, Hereford, Aumale, and Exeter, the marquis of Dorset, and of himself. Henry then said, "If such be the case, we can never trust them"; to which Mowbray rejoined, "So it is, and though they may not be able to do it now, they will contrive to destroy us in our houses ten years hence."

This reign, as abounding in dark and treacherous transactions, is rich in historical doubts. It is not clear how this conversation was reported to

Richard, but the damning suspicion rests upon Henry of Bolingbroke. When parliament met after the recess, in the month of January, 1398, Hereford was called upon by the king to relate what had passed between the duke of Norfolk and himself; and then Hereford rose and presented in writing the whole of the conversation. Norfolk did not attend in parliament, but he surrendered on proclamation, called Henry of Lancaster a liar and false traitor, and threw down his gauntlet. Richard ordered both parties into custody, and instead of submitting the case to parliament, referred it to a court of chivalry, which, after many delays, awarded that wager of battle should be joined at Coventry, on the 16th of September.

As the time approached, Richard was heard to say, "Now I shall have peace from henceforward"; but, on the appointed day, when the combatants were in the lists, and had couched their lances, throwing down his warder between them he took the battle into his own hands. After consulting with the committee of parliament—the base eighteen—to the bewilderment of all men, he condemned Hereford to banishment for ten years and Norfolk for life. Hereford went no further than France; Norfolk made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and not long after died broken-hearted at Venice. On the death of the duke of Lancaster, which happened about three months after the exile of his son Hereford, Richard seized his immense estates and kept them, notwithstanding his having, before Hereford's departure out of England, granted him letters-patent, permitting him to appoint attorneys to represent him and take possession of his lawful inheritance. But now there was no law in the land except what proceeded from the will of Richard, who, after ridding himself, as he fancied forever, of the two great peers, set no limits to his despotism.

He raised money by forced loans; he coerced the judges, and in order to obtain fines he outlawed seventeen counties by one stroke of the pen, alleging that they had favoured his enemies in the affair of Radcot bridge. He was told by some friends that the country was in a ferment, and that plots and conspiracies were forming against him; but the infatuated man chose this very moment for leaving England. In the end of the month of May, 1399, he sailed from Milford Haven with a splendid fleet. He took the field against the Irish on the 20th of June; and a fortnight after, his cousin, the duke of Hereford, landed at Ravenspur in Yorkshire. The duke had not escaped from France without difficulty, and all the retinue he brought with him consisted of the exiled archbishop of Canterbury, the son of the late earl of Arundel, fifteen knights and men-at-arms, and a few servants.

But the wily Henry was strong in the affections of the people: and both he and the archbishop had many personal friends among the nobles. As soon as he landed, he was joined by the earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland; and as he declared that he came only for the estates belonging to his father, he was speedily reinforced by many who did not foresee and who, at that stage, would not have approved his full and daring scheme. He marched with rapidity towards the capital, and arrived there at the head of sixty thousand men. His uncle, the duke of York, quitted the city before his approach, and, as regent of the kingdom during Richard's absence, raised the royal standard at St. Albans. The Londoners received Hereford as a deliverer. A general panic prevailed among the creatures of Richard, some of whom shut themselves up in Bristol castle. The duke of York, with such forces as he could collect, moved towards the west, there to await the arrival of Richard.

After staying a few days in London, Henry marched in the same direction, and so rapid was his course that he reached the Severn on the same day as

the regent. The duke of York had discovered before this that he could place no reliance on his troops: and probably his resentment for the murder of his brother Gloucester was greater than his affection for his nephew Richard. Henry of Bolingbroke was also his nephew, and when he agreed to meet that master-mind in a secret conference, the effect was inevitable. York joined his forces to those of Henry, and helped him to take Bristol castle. Three members of the standing committee of eighteen, the earl of Wiltshire, Bussy, and Green, were found in the castle, and executed without trial. Henry then marched towards Chester, but York stopped at Bristol.[b]

For three critical weeks Richard remained in Ireland, ignorant of the extraordinary revolution which had destroyed his authority at home. The tidings overwhelmed him. But it was resolved that Lord Salisbury should repair forthwith to North Wales, while the king should make the necessary preparations for disembarking at Milford Haven. He lingered, however, in Ireland eighteen days longer. During this interval Salisbury was deserted by his disheartened and impatient followers. Richard, on landing, went in disguise to Conway, to concert measures with his general, whom, however, he found with only a few faithful followers, who had thrown themselves into the noble castle there. Meanwhile the leaders of the army at Milford Haven, influenced by despondency and probably by disaffection, disbanded their troops. Thomas Percy, earl of Worcester, the lord steward, broke his white staff, as a token that all authority derived from Richard's commission had expired.

At the same time the king, learning the decisive events at Bristol and the surrender of all the fortresses on the Scottish frontier to Henry, shut himself up in Conway castle. It became Henry's policy to show a semblance of negotiation, to lure Richard from his fastness. The earl of Northumberland accordingly was despatched with a thousand men, secretly posted at some distance, that their appearance might not alarm the fugitive monarch. Northumberland represented that Henry would be content with a free parliament, pardon, and restoration of inheritance, together with the hereditary office of chief justiciary for himself, and condign punishment on the murderers of Gloucester, and all their aiders and abettors. After solemn assurances of safety, ratified by Northumberland's oath, Richard consented to accompany that nobleman to an interview with Lancaster. On his journey, however, he suddenly caught a glance of the soldiers placed in ambush on the road. He expostulated. Northumberland told him it was only a guard of honour. The king claimed his liberty. Percy, now his confessed gaoler, avowed that the king was his prisoner. At the interview, Lancaster entered the apartment uncovered, bending his knee for the last time to his royal captive. "Fair cousin of Lancaster," said Richard, uncovering himself, "you are welcome!" "My lord," answered Henry, "I am come before my time; but your people complain that they have been governed too rigorously for twenty years. If it please God, I will help you to govern them better." "Fair cousin," replied the other, for the last time performing the part of king, "since it pleaseth you, it pleaseth me well." He was brought prisoner to Chester, where he was made to issue a proclamation for preserving the peace, and writs for calling together a parliament. On his arrival in London, he was lodged for one night in his palace, but on the next he was removed to the Tower, there to continue a close prisoner until parliament should pronounce judgment in his case.

The revolution which followed, though accomplished by a national revolt against misrule, becomes, nevertheless, a memorable event in English consti-

tutional history, and a satisfactory proof of the opinion of the nation's ancestors respecting their government, from the elaborate care which they employed in clothing their proceedings with constitutional forms, and in regulating, by the principles of law, acts which are the least subject to its ordinary jurisdiction.

On an appointed day a deputation of lords and commons, consisting of an archbishop, the earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, Thyrning and Markham, justices, Stowe and Burbage, doctors of laws, with many other ecclesiastics and laymen, waited on the king; and, having reminded him of his declaration in Conway castle of his unfitness for government and readiness to resign, proceeded to request that he would embody this in a legal form. He accordingly read aloud, say the reporters, "with a cheerful countenance," a renunciation of the crown, absolving all his subjects from homage and fealty: "I confess, recognise, and from certain knowledge conscientiously declare that I consider myself to have been and to be insufficient for the government of this kingdom, and for my notorious demerits not undeserving of deposition." He added that, if he had had the power to nominate a successor, he should have placed his cousin Henry, duke of Lancaster, on the throne.

Not willing, however, to rest the legitimacy of the revolution upon a compulsory resignation, the estates of parliament assembled in Westminster hall, where the above acknowledgment and renunciation, having been read over in English and in Latin, was once more ratified by the lords and commons, amidst the applauses of the multitude assembled in that great hall. Still further to show them the deep foundations of national right, they received thirty-two articles of impeachment against the king; and having unanimously convicted him of the charges, which contain a recital of the principal acts of his reign, they then proceeded, "out of superabundant caution," to add a formal deposition to the apparently voluntary abdication. In all these bold measures they rigorously observed the usage of parliament and the formalities of law.[e]

The account given by certain historians of Richard's escape into Scotland, where he is said to have resided twenty years, requires a short statement of reasons for adhering to the common narrative. These reasons are as follows: (1) A long-continued fraud of this sort is with difficulty supposable, even in the case of a prince known only in his infancy within the narrow circle of a court, and produced to the public after an interval of many years. But what room for doubt could have existed respecting Richard at the time of his deposition, after a reign of twenty-two years, in which his reign was perfectly known to the nobility and people of France, Scotland, and Ireland, as well as England? (2) The declaration of Scrope, archbishop of York, that Richard had been put to death at Pontefract, published within a few miles of the place, and within about two years of the time, is evidence which, being then uncontradicted, is to us of the highest order. (3) The government of Scotland supported the revolts of the Percys and Owen Glendower. Could that government have omitted all mention in their public acts of their being the friends and allies of the lawful king of England? (4) The earl of Northumberland, who was beheaded in 1406, took refuge in Scotland, and was long sheltered there. Is it credible that he should not have ascertained beyond all doubt whether his late master was alive in that country? (5) Isabella of France, who had been affianced to Richard in her infancy, married Charles, duke of Orleans, in 1406, and died in childbed in 1409—a tolerable presumption that her family had sufficient assurance of Richard's death, twelve years before the time assigned for it by the Scotch tradition.

No doubt can be entertained that Richard was at first believed to be alive in Scotland. That a man who was called Richard was represented as living there at the accession of Henry VI is apparent from Rymer. That he originally personated the king of that name, and deceived some persons, is also probable. But, besides other difficulties, it may be concluded—from the total absence of minute and circumstantial statement of the manner of escape, of the place of residence, and of all other smaller facts, of which there could not fail to be some remaining intimation if the person were the true Richard—that he was soon detected, though the name or nickname of King Richard may have afterwards been applied to him.[e] Freeman[h] believes that there is no just ground for doubting that Richard either died or was murdered soon after the Welsh revolt of 1400. The appearance of a pretender who was made use of by both Scotch and French enemies was the almost inevitable sequence of every disputed succession.[a]

HENRY'S CLAIM TO THE THRONE

On the second day after Richard's deposition the duke of Lancaster was placed in his seat at the head of the nobility, but the throne was vacant. At the moment, however, of the sentence of deposition, the duke of Lancaster had claimed the throne, that no violence might be done to the startling metaphor of an immortal king; by which English laws express the simple fact that, when the supreme authority is extinguished by the death of one man, the law makes provision for its instantaneous revival in the person of another. The claim of Henry was framed so as to include a false assertion of hereditary right, without surrendering its true foundation in the consent of parliament and the misgovernment of his predecessor. "In the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I, Henry of Lancaster, challenge this realm of England, because I am descended by right line of blood from the good lord King Henry III. The which realm was on the point to be undone for default of government, and undoing of the good laws." The new king was then seated on the throne.[e]

Henry's challenge by descent from Henry III was shrouded in purposed vagueness. He was, through his mother, the direct representative of Edmund, earl of Lancaster, the second son of Henry III, who according to an absurd rumour was really his eldest son. Henry's vague words might be taken as meaning only that he was the next to the crown in male succession. But that any claim of the kind should have been thought of when Henry had a perfectly good right by parliamentary election, shows how the ancient right of the nation freely to choose its sovereign was gradually dying out.[h]

It seems unaccountable that, in a country where the government was established on the basis of such a deposition, it should ever have been thought doubtful whether political power was held in trust or as property. No confusion could well have arisen if the moral character of this revolution had been carefully distinguished from its constitutional principles. To try the latter, we must suppose, for the sake of argument, the truth of the matters charged against the king. It is only thus that we can try its legitimacy, or ascertain from it the constitutional opinion of the fourteenth century. If it had been unsuspected of ambition, if no crime had subsequently tarnished its fame, its justice at least must have been unanimously owned. However wise or convenient it may be to exempt kings from criminal proceedings, which generally shake society to its centre without the likelihood of their being ever

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conducted with calmness and impartiality, it cannot be imagined that an inferior criminality in the acts of kings forms any part of the reason for exempting them from animadversion. A royal conspiracy against the liberty of the people is at least as heinous an offence as a conspiracy of subjects against the authority of their sovereign. Of such a conspiracy there is no pretence for acquitting Richard; nor can it be doubted that he united an irascible temper with deep, lasting, and watchful revenge. These dark qualities are odiously blended in his character with the lighter defects and better humoured vices, and served in ordinary times to hide the infernal disposition which broke out as soon as an opportunity of revenge presented itself. [Richard's character, indeed, is a strange combination of strength and weakness, courage and irresolution, indolence and energy. His protection of Wycliffe and encouragement of Chaucer are in marked contrast to other acts of his career.]

ABBOT'S HOUSE, TEWKESBURY
(Late fourteenth century)

The contests for the crown which agitated England during the fifteenth century cannot be easily rendered intelligible, without premising a short sketch of the state of the royal family at the deposition of Richard. That prince left no issue by his first queen, Anne of Luxemburg, and the extreme childhood of the infant princess of France to whom he was affianced had not allowed him to complete his nuptials. Had the crown followed the course of hereditary succession, it would have devolved on the posterity of Lionel, duke of Clarence, the second son of Edward III. By the decease of the latter without issue male, his possessions and pretensions fell to his daughter Philippa, who, by a singular combination of circumstances, had married Roger Mortimer, earl of March, the male representative of the powerful baron who had been attainted and executed for the murder of Edward II. The son of that powerful delinquent had been restored to his honours and estates at an advanced period in the reign of Edward III, long after the violence of his father and brother's enemies had subsided. Edmund, his grandson, had espoused Philippa of Clarence. Roger Mortimer, the fourth in descent from the regicide, had been lord lieutenant of Ireland, and considered, or, according to some writers, declared to be heir of the crown in the early part of Richard's reign.

Edmund Mortimer, earl of March, in whom the hereditary claim to the crown was vested at the deposition of Richard, was then a boy of only ten years of age. Educated from childhood in a mild and honourable prison at Windsor, he faithfully served the Lancastrian princes till his death, which took place in the third year of Henry VI. Dying without issue, the pretensions to the crown which he inherited through the duke of Clarence devolved on his sister Anne Mortimer, who espoused Richard of York, earl of Cambridge, the grandson of Edward III by his fourth son Edmund of Langley, duke of York. But it is obvious from the above brief pedigree that during the life of Mortimer, who died in 1425, no pretension to the crown had accrued to any branch of the house of York.[e]

CONSTITUTIONAL GROWTH IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

The period of the Hundred Years' War was the time in which what we may call the growth of England came to an end. The nation in its later shape was fully formed at the end of the thirteenth century. The changes in later times have been great and important; but they have been changes of detail. In the thirteenth century it was still by no means clear what was to be the final shape of English institutions, what was to be the final position of the English people at home and abroad. In the fifteenth century all this had been fixed. The constitution, the laws, the language, the national character of Englishmen had all taken a shape from which in their main points they were never again to change. Up to this time the history of the nation has been the record of its growth; our study has had somewhat of a physical character. From this time our history ceases to be the record of the growth of a nation; it becomes the record of the acts of a nation after it has taken its final shape.

FOURTEENTH CENTURY DOORWAY

In a specially constitutional aspect, the reign of Edward III is hardly less important than the reign of Edward I. But its importance is of a different kind. The earlier reign fixed the constitution of parliament; it decreed that in an English parliament certain elements should always be present. It laid down as a matter of broad principle what the essential powers of parliament were. In the later reign, the essential elements of parliament finally arranged themselves in their several places and relations to one another. The powers, rights, and privileges of each element in the state, and the exact manner of exercising them, were now fixed and defined. The commons were now fully established as an essential element in parliament. It was further established that prelates, earls, and barons were to form one body, that knights, citizens, and burgesses were to form another. That is to say, as the attempt to make the clergy act as a parliamentary estate came to nothing, parliament now definitely took its modern form of an assembly of two houses, lords and commons.

POWERS OF PARLIAMENT

A statute of Edward II in 1322 distinctly asserted the right of the commons to a share in all acts which touched the general welfare of the kingdom. But a distinction was for a long time drawn between the older and the newer element in the assembly. For a long time the doctrine was that the commons petitioned, and that their petitions were granted by the king with the assent of

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the lords. This position of the commons as a petitioning body is of the deepest importance, and looks both forwards and backwards. Looking backwards, it was an almost necessary result of the way in which parliament had grown up. The lords were and the commons were not representatives by direct succession of the ancient sovereign assemblies of the land. It was for them by immemorial right to advise the king and to consent to his acts. The commons had been called into being alongside of them; they had no such traditional powers; they could win them only step by step. Looking forwards, the position of the commons as a petitioning body was a source of immediate weakness and of final strength. For a while they simply petitioned; not only might their petitions be refused, but, if they were granted, they had no control over the shape in which they were granted. If the king granted a petition which involved any change in the law, it was by royal officers that the petition was put into the form of a statute after the representatives of the commons had gone back to their homes. Such a practice gave opportunity for many tricks. It was a frequent subject of complaint that the petitions which were said to be granted, and the statutes which were enacted in answer to them, were something quite different from what the commons had really asked for.

As long as the commons were mere petitioners at whose request a law was enacted, it might be held that the king was equally able to enact at the request of some other petitioning body. Thus we still find statutes sometimes enacted without the petition of the commons—sometimes, for instance, at the petition of the clergy. So again this same position of the commons as a petitioning body led to one distinction between them and the lords which has gone on to our own times—in one chief function of the ancient assemblies the commons never obtained a direct share. Parliament, like those ancient assemblies, has always been the highest court of justice. But its strictly judicial powers have always been exercised by the lords only. The commons, by virtue of their petitioning power, have become denouncers and accusers; but they

GATEWAY TO CASTLE
(Built in time of Richard II)

have never become judges. By virtue of their petitioning power, they began, as early as the reign of Edward III, to denounce the ministers of the king, and to demand their dismissal. In the Good Parliament of 1376, and again in the parliament of Richard, ten years later, this power grows into a regular impeachment of the offenders, which is brought by the commons as accusers before the lords as judges. Whenever the commons have taken part in action

which was practically judicial it has always been under some other form. They have exercised a somewhat arbitrary and anomalous authority in defence of their own privileges. They have passed bills of attainder and bills of pains and penalties; but these take the form of legislative acts. Strictly judicial functions like those of the lords they have never claimed.

One effect of the growth of the commons was to give a more definite position to the lords. As long as there was only one body, and that a fluctuating body, membership of the assembly could not be looked on as conferring any definite status. None but the bishops and earls had any undoubted personal claim. Some abbots, some barons were always summoned; but for a long time they were not always the same abbots or the same barons. So long as this state of things lasted no definite line could be drawn between those who were members of the assembly and those who were not. It was only when a new body arose by the side of the old one, a body which confessedly represented all persons who had no place in the elder body, that membership of the elder body became a definite personal privilege.

THE ROYAL PREROGATIVE

As the growth of the commons at once raised and defined the position of the lords, so the general growth of the power of parliament at once defined and by defining strengthened the king's prerogative. It now became a question what acts were lawful to the king without the consent of parliament, and what acts needed that consent. It is clear that, whenever prerogative was defined, it was at once limited and strengthened. But the very strengthening was of the nature of a limitation. A power which was directly or indirectly bestowed by parliament ceased to be a power inherent in the crown. The struggle was, therefore, a hard one. The kings strove to hold their ground at every point, and to escape from the fetters which the nation strove to lay upon them. When the commons tried to make the king dismiss evil councillors or moderate the expenses of his household, when they tried to regulate the oppressive right of purveyance, the king was apt to find a loop-hole in some protest or reservation or saving clause. So the kings strove to keep the power of arbitrary taxation in their own hands, by drawing distinctions between customs and other sources of revenue. So they strove to keep the power of legislation without the consent of parliament, by drawing a distinction between statutes and ordinances, and by pretending to a right to suspend the operation of statutes. The greater and the smaller council were alike fragments of the national assembly, and both alike derived their special shape from the practice of personal summons. If one body so formed had the right of legislation, it might be argued that the other body so formed had it also. So again, as the commons grew, the form of their petitions, praying that such and such an enactment might be made by the king with the consent of the lords, seemed to recognise the king as the only real lawgiver. It might suggest the thought that he could, if he would, exercise his legislative powers, even though the commons did not petition, and though the lords did not assent. A crowd of loop-holes were thus opened for irregular doings of all kinds: for attempts on the part of the kings to evade every constitutional fetter; for attempts to reign without parliaments, to impose taxes by their own authority, or to legislate with the consent only of their own council, or of some other body other than a regular parliament. By the end of the fourteenth century we may say that the constitution and the powers of parlia-

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ment were, as far as the letter of the law went, much the same as they are now. But it took three hundred years more to secure the observance of the letter of the law.

WAR, PEACE, AND THE SUCCESSION

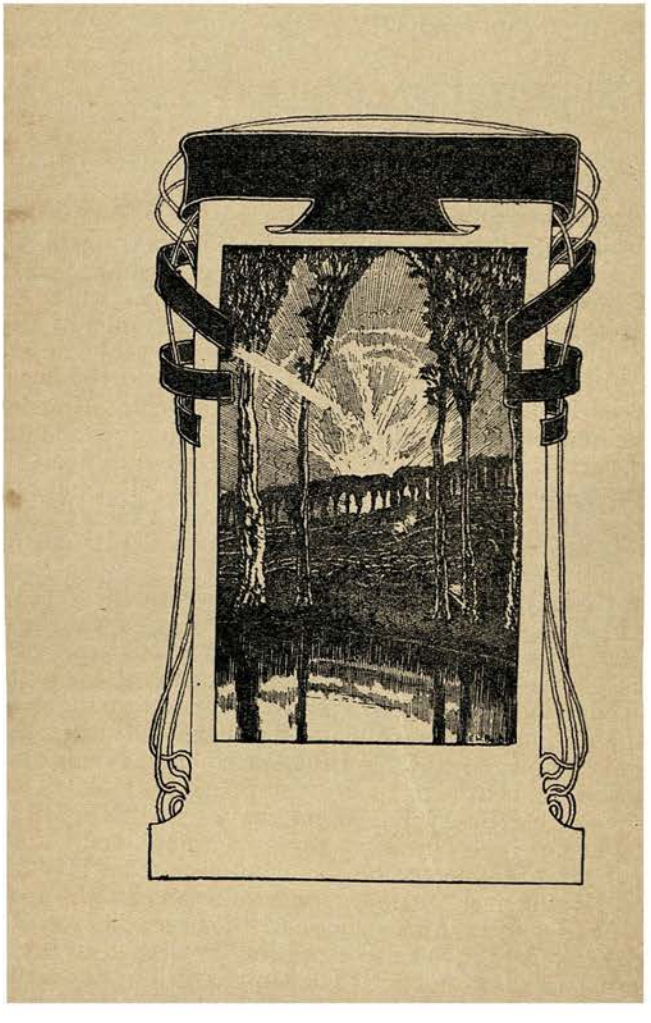
In those days a power was either exercised directly or it was not exercised at all. Thus one most important power which was freely exercised by our most ancient assemblies, but which modern parliaments shrink from directly exercising—the power of making peace and war—was in the fourteenth century in a very irregular state. Sometimes parliament claims a voice in such matters; sometimes the king seems to thrust a control over them on an unwilling parliament. That is to say, the kings wished to make parliament share the responsibility of their acts. A parliament could hardly refuse to support the king in a war which it had itself approved. The wars of Edward III, and his constant calls for money, made frequent parliaments needful. Perhaps no other series of events in English history did so much to strengthen and define every parliamentary power.

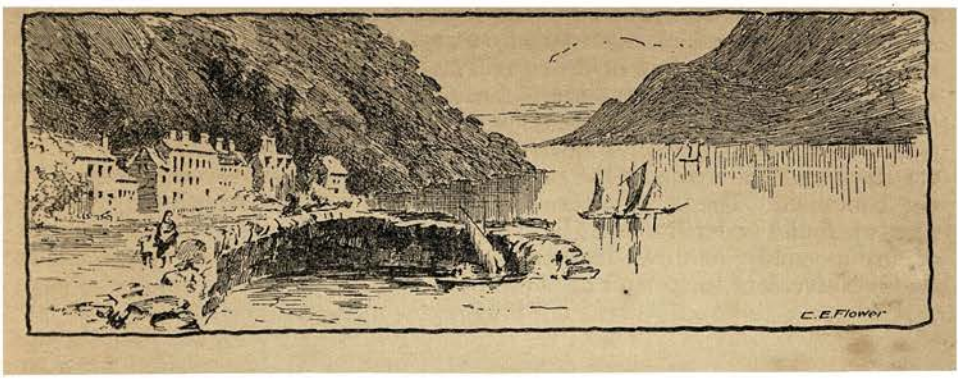
But it was mainly by the petitioning position of the commons that all power has thus been drawn into the hands of parliament. Any matter might become the subject of a petition of the commons. It followed that, as their petitions gradually grew into demands which could not be resisted, every matter might become the subject of legislation by the commons. In their position as petitioners lay their strength. They only petitioned, whilst the king enacted and the lords assented. But the humbler position gave them the first word. The enacting power of the king gradually came to be a mere power of refusing to enact, a power which has long ceased to be exercised. The humble petitioners came to be the proposers of everything, and so to be the masters of everything. They had the privilege of the *prærogativa tribus*.

The power of parliament to settle the succession to the crown—that is, the ancient right of election, in another shape, comes more largely into play at a later period. We have, however, one of the greatest instances of its exercise in the deposition of Richard and the settlement of the crown on Henry IV and his heirs. And twelve years before the ancient doctrine was carried out in practice, it was solemnly declared by Bishop Arundel and Thomas, duke of Gloucester, speaking in the name of parliament, that, by an ancient statute, parliament, with the common consent of the nation, had a right to depose a king who failed to govern according to the laws and by the advice of his peers, and to call to the throne some other member of the royal family in his stead. Most certainly there never was such a statute in the form of a statute; but the doctrine simply expressed the immemorial principle on which the nation had always acted whenever it was needful. And the statement that there was a statute to that effect was perhaps simply an instance of the growth of the doctrines of the professional lawyers. Men were beginning to forget that the earliest written law was nothing more than immemorial custom committed to writing. They were beginning to think that, wherever there was law or even custom, it must have had its beginning in some written even if forgotten enactment.

The powers of parliament in this age, and the external influences under which parliaments acted, cannot be better illustrated than by a comparison of the last two parliaments of Edward III. The parliament of 1376, which lived in men's memories by the name of the Good Parliament, had the full support of the prince of Wales. It was able to overthrow the king's ministers,

to remove his favourite, Alice Perrers, from court, and to encumber him with a council. A crowd of petitions of various kinds were presented, some of them insisting on freedom of election. The houses separated; the prince died; all the acts of the parliament were set at nought; most of them were reversed by a packed parliament the next year. Yet even this packed parliament established some wholesome doctrines, and amongst others enacted that no statute should be made at the petition of the clergy without the consent of the commons. The same alternation of reforming and reactionary parliaments is found under Richard II. There is no surer witness to the importance of any assembly, or other institution, than the fact that the ruling powers find it convenient to corrupt or pervert it.[h]





CHAPTER XIV

HENRY IV AND HENRY V

[1399–1422 A.D.]

THE claim to the crown which Henry of Lancaster made "in his mother tongue," was a well considered form of words. The averment that "the realm was on the point to be undone for default of government and undoing of the good laws," was the true foundation of the deposition which the parliament had pronounced upon Richard. But the legal advisers of Henry took care to introduce a statement of hereditary right. He took the same great seal as Richard, with the single alteration of the name on the legend. The badges of the house of Lancaster—the crowned and chained antelope, the swan, the red rose, and the columbine—decorate the illuminated manuscripts of the Lancastrian period. The claim of Henry was equivocally put. Richard being deposed, Henry was not the next in the line of inheritance as the grandson of Edward III. The posterity of Lionel, duke of Clarence, the second son of Edward III, had a prior claim to that of the heir of John of Gaunt, the third son.

At the time of Richard's deposition, the hereditary claim of the Clarence branch was vested in Edmund Mortimer, earl of March, who was the grandson of Philippa, the daughter of Lionel. But he was only ten years of age. In the sermon which the archbishop of Canterbury preached when the parliament deposed Richard and chose Henry, he took for his text, "A man shall reign over my people"; and he descanted on the theme that when the King of kings threatened his people, he said, "I will make children to rule over them." Nothing could more distinctly point to the young earl of March. The claim by blood from "the good king Henry III," would have stood Henry of Lancaster in little avail, had he not been known as a man of vigour and ability, at the head of a powerful army, supported by the chief nobles, the favourite of the people. Edmund Mortimer, set aside by the revolution of 1399, died without issue in 1424. He had a sister, Anne, who married the second son of Edmund Langley, duke of York; and in her son arose the pretension to the crown of the house of York. The chronicler, Hall,[b] quaintly but most justly said, "What misery, what murder, and what execrable plagues this famous region hath suffered by the division and dissension of the renowned houses of Lan-

caster and York, my wit cannot comprehend, nor my tongue declare, neither yet my pen fully set forth." This is the tragical story that arises out of the deposition of Richard II. It is a story well known to the English people, for it has been told in the dramatic form by a great historical teacher.

When the deposed Richard hoped that his cousin would be "good lord to him," he hoped for an impossibility. To retain some portion of his state, to be served by an expensive household, to appear in public would have been fatal to the quiet rule of the house of Lancaster. To permit him to reside abroad would have been dangerous to the safety of the kingdom. The lords in parliament attempted to meet the difficulty by a resolution, which was to be kept secret, that it seemed advisable to them that the late king should be put under a safe and secret guard, in a place where no concourse of people might resort to him, and with no attendant who had been familiar to him about his person. When the question was put to the lords, the earl of Northumberland said, "The king would have his life saved." Four days afterwards the king came to parliament; and it was determined that Richard, late king of England, should be adjudged to perpetual imprisonment, in safe and secret ward. Froissart[e] truly says, "Every man might well consider that he should never come out of prison alive." In the parliament of October, 1399, all the old hatreds and jealousies were revived, in the discussion of the conduct of the lords who had appealed Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick of treason.

HENRY IV
(1367–1413)

The most violent disputes took place. The terms, so odious to honourable ears, of "liar" and "traitor," were freely exchanged, and gauntlets were thrown on the floor of the house. The lords appellants lost the honours and the lands which Richard had bestowed on them for their subserviency. But they escaped all other punishment. The duke of Aumale sank down to earl of Rutland; and the dukes of Exeter and Surrey, Richard's half-brothers, to earls of Huntingdon and Kent. Violent as this parliament was, it wisely sought to restrain future violence. It limited treason to the offences enumerated in the act of Edward III, in which that chief crime against civil government was taken out of the hands of the king's justices, and "what are treasons" was declared in parliament. It referred the accuser in a case of treason to the courts of law, abolishing those appeals of treason which had been productive of such evil effects. It forbade any delegation of the powers of parliament to a committee. It tried to restrain the quarrels of great nobles, by forbidding any person, except the king, to give liveries to his retainers. All this was indicative that the reign of justice was come back. In less than three months, in a confederacy of nobles, it was determined to attempt the restoration of Richard, and to drive Henry from power.

[1399-1401 A.D.]

The plot became known to the vigilant king, disclosed to him unwillingly by Rutland, who was one of the confederates. Windsor castle was surprised; but the forewarned Henry was in London levying an army. The conspirators marched to the west, proclaiming King Richard. At Cirencester they were attacked in their quarters by the burghers, and the earls of Kent and Salisbury were seized and beheaded. The citizens of Bristol, in the same way, secured and executed Lord Lumley and Lord Despenser. Huntingdon was put to death by the tenants of the duke of Gloucester at Plashey. The popular attachment to Henry was thus signally manifested. There were a few executions under the legal judgment of the courts of law. The insurrection was at the beginning of January. Before the expiration of a month it was stated that the late king had died at Pontefract. The body was conveyed to London, and there shown, with the face exposed, so that those who knew Richard might identify him. The obsequies of the deposed king were performed in St. Paul's, Henry being present, and the corpse was subsequently interred at Langley. Henry V, upon coming to the throne, caused it to be removed to Westminster Abbey.

THE WELSH REVOLT. THE FATE OF RICHARD

During the later years of the reign of Richard, however distasteful his rule might have been in England, there was a strong attachment to him in Wales. When he sailed from Ireland to meet his enemy, he landed in Wales, confident that he should there find a powerful army. His procrastination alone caused the dispersion of that army. The statute book shows how obnoxious was the revolution of 1399 to the Welsh borderers. A parliament was held at Westminster in the second year of Henry's reign, 1400–1401, when the commons complained of the ravages of the Welsh in the countries joining upon the marches of Wales by carrying off cattle and arresting merchants. Various strong measures were then enacted, quite sufficient in their severe injustice to produce a general revolt. It was not enough to sanction reprisals upon Welsh property and persons; but it was ordained that no Welshman should be permitted to purchase land in England, and that no "whole Englishman" should be convicted at the suit of any Welshman within Wales, except by the judgment of English justices. To make the separation of the two nations complete, it was also ordained that no Welshman should be thenceforth chosen to be citizen or burgess in any English city or town. The next year, another parliament passed more stringent measures, amongst which it was enacted that no Welshman should bear arms nor defensible armour. The country was in insurrection; the Welsh had found a leader. "It is ordained and stablished that no Englishman married to any Welshwoman of the amity and alliance of Owen of Gleindour, traitor to our sovereign lord, or to any other Welshwoman after the rebellion of the said Owen, shall be put in any office in Wales, or in the marches of the same."

Owen of Gleindour—or as we now write, Owen Glendower—was one of the most remarkable men of this period. Claiming descent from the ancient British princes, being the great-grandson of the famous Llewelyn, he might still have remained a peaceful landowner in Wales, but for the deposition of the master whom he had served as an esquire of his household. Educated at one of the inns of court in London, he possessed an amount of knowledge which made him regarded as a necromancer by his simple countrymen. His property was contiguous to that of Lord Grey de Ruthyn, and the Anglo-Norman baron claimed and seized some portion of it. Glendower petitioned

the parliament of 1400 for redress. His petition was dismissed by the peers, with the scornful answer that they "cared not for barefooted rascals." He took arms, made Lord Grey his prisoner, and wasted his barony.

But the private feud became a national revolt. The mountains again heard the bardic songs, which were applied to the new hero who had arisen to restore the glory of the ancient Britons. Henry thought to stop the popular voice by decreeing that "no waster, rhymer, minstrel, nor vagabond be any wise sustained in the land of Wales." The Welsh scholars of Oxford and Cambridge departed to their own country, in 1401, to aid the rebellion, and the Welsh labourers employed in England escaped to join their countrymen. Owen Glendower, by the general voice of the people, was declared prince of Wales. Before the rebellion had attained any very extensive organisation, Harry Percy (Hotspur) and Prince Henry were engaged in different parts of the country against the insurgents. Henry of Monmouth, in 1401, was in his fourteenth year. His command in Wales could have been only nominal; and we are glad, therefore, to believe that a letter of this period, addressed in his name to the council, was a mere official communication. The boy is made to say, describing his triumphal progress, "We caused the whole place to be set on fire: we laid waste a fine and populous country." This is learning the lessons of chivalry at a very early age. He continued, however, in authority, but was much straitened in his slaughter and burnings for want of money to pay his archers and men-at-arms. In 1402, Sir Edmund Mortimer, uncle to the young earl of March, went against Glendower; and, his army being utterly routed in Radnorshire, he was taken prisoner.

The king now determined to go in person, "to check the insolences and malice of Owen Glendower and other rebels." His expedition was fruitless. The royal army, in the month of August, was exposed to storms of rain, snow, and hail, and Glendower was alleged to have raised them by his wicked sorcery. That autumn the sagacious Welshman defied all the power of England in his mountain fastnesses. In the succeeding winter, his prisoner, Edmund Mortimer, became his friend and ally. Henry, with that jealousy which formed a part of his character, refused to ransom his "beloved cousin"; and Mortimer consoled himself by marrying the great Welsh chieftain's daughter. On the 13th of December, 1402, he writes thus to his tenants: "Very dear and well-beloved, I greet you much, and make known to you that Owen Glyndor has raised a quarrel, of which the object is, if King Richard be alive, to restore him to his crown; and if not, that my honoured nephew, who is the right heir to the said crown, shall be king of England, and that the said Owen will assert his right in Wales. And I, seeing and considering that the said quarrel is good and reasonable, have consented to join in it, and to aid and maintain it, and, by the grace of God, to a good end. Amen!"

"If King Richard be alive"! It is nearly three years since King Richard's body was exposed in St. Paul's Church—a public act known to all the kingdom, and especially known to all such as Sir Edmund Mortimer. How can a doubt now be raised, "if King Richard be alive"? In six months from the date of this letter, a great host, headed by the Percys, will be looking for Glendower to fight with them against King Henry; and before they meet him in Hateley Field near Shrewsbury, they will denounce the usurping king as a murderer in the following words: "Thou hast caused our sovereign lord and thine, traitorously within the castle of Pomfret [Pontefract], without the consent or judgment of the lords of the realm, by the space of fifteen days and so many nights, with hunger, thirst, and cold, to perish." How are these contradictions to be solved? For years, Henry had to struggle against two

[1402 A.D.]

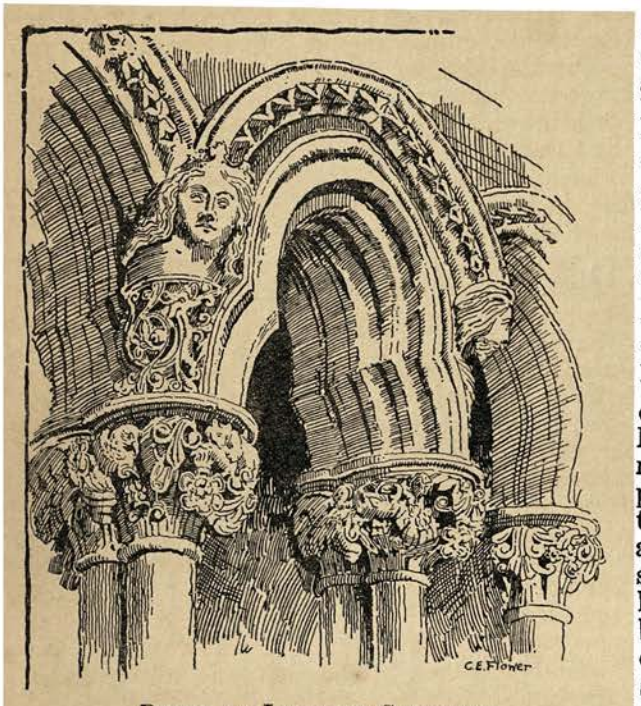
popular beliefs. The first, and the most natural, was, that he had put Richard to death.

That he died by violence is highly probable. His removal would add much to the safety of his successor, and every opportunity was afforded by his secret imprisonment to effect this removal by the foulest means. Thus Henry was publicly accused by the Percys of having procured Richard's death by starvation. The duke of Orleans, in 1403, in a letter to Henry, insinuated that he was guilty of the murder, and the king replied: "With regard to that passage in your letter where you speak of the death of our very dear cousin and lord, whom God absolve, saying 'God knows how it happened, and by whom that death was done,' we know not with what intent such words are used; but if you mean and dare to say that his death was caused by our order, or with our consent, we say that is false, and you will say what is false as often as you shall say so; as the true God knows, whom we call to witness: offering our body against yours in single combat, if you will or dare to prove it." In an age when the appeals of kings to heaven were occasionally of no more value than "dicers' oaths," this will not go for much. An account from a contemporary states that Sir Pierce Exton, with a band of assassins, entered his prison at Pontefract, and that Richard, seizing a battle-axe, fell bravely fighting with unequal numbers. Some years ago Richard's tomb was opened in Westminster abbey, and no marks of violence appeared on his skull, on which the contemporary relates that he received his death-wound. Walsingham,[f] the chronicler, affirms as common rumour that Richard died by voluntary starvation. Froissart[e] says, "How Richard died, and by what means, I could not tell when I wrote this chronicle." The question is no nearer its solution after four centuries and a half.

The other popular belief, the most embarrassing to Henry, was that Richard had escaped from Pontefract and was living in Scotland. For several years there were proclamations against those who spread this rumour, and some were punished by death for this offence. The belief gradually passed away from the popular mind; and the chroniclers explain that a man named Serle, a servant to King Richard, having heard that his old master was alive in Scotland, came over from France, persuaded the court fool to personate the ex-king, and was eventually executed as a traitor for the deception which had entrapped many persons into the confidence that Richard was coming to claim his crown. The fondness for "historic doubts" has revived the belief in our own times. It is stated that Richard's escape from Pontefract is proved by documents in the Record Office; that this escape was effected in connection with the rising of 1400, in which he was proclaimed by the earls who afterwards suffered as traitors; that there are entries in the public accounts of Scotland of expenses for the custody of King Richard of England; and that Richard lived till 1419 in Stirling castle, in a state of imbecility. The vague and contradictory accounts of the manner of Richard's death by violence give some little sanction to the belief that he was not murdered at all. But if we even accept the explanation that another body was substituted for Richard's at St. Paul's on the 14th of March, 1400, and that Henry and his court went through the mummery of his false obsequies, we have still so many difficulties to reconcile that we have little hesitation in believing that the Richard of Stirling castle was an impostor. The French believed in Richard's death when the son of the duke of Orleans married Isabella in 1406. In the same year the lords addressed Henry, praying that those "might be put to prison who preach and publish that Richard, late king, who is dead, should be in full life"; or that "the fool in Scotland" is that King Richard who is dead.

The Statute de Heretico Comburendo

However defective may be the evidence upon which impartial history must condemn or acquit Henry IV of the murder of Richard II, he must bear the infamy of a political crime of broader and deeper significance. He was the first English king who put men to death by statute for their religious belief. He came to the throne with almost the unanimous support of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Archbishop Arundel was his great upholder; and this primate made Henry his instrument for the destruction of those who had assailed the corruptions of the church. Henry's father had been a supporter of Wycliffe. The son of John of Gaunt was to be the persecutor of Wycliffe's followers. Henry was carried to the throne with the avowal of popular principles. The lay barons and the commons were opposed to the pretensions of the church to be above all inquiry—a dominant and irresponsible power. But Henry knew the strength of a body that, according to an estimate of his time, possessed one third of the revenues of the kingdom. In the first year of his reign was passed the statute *De heretico comburendo*—"the first statute and butcherly knife," says Prynne, "that the impeaching prelates procured or had against the poor preachers of Christ's gospel."



DETAIL OF LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL

(Thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Besieged and greatly damaged by the Puritans in 1643)

The fiery persecution of Archbishop Arundel was grounded upon these charges: "Whereas it is showed to our sovereign lord the king on the behalf of the prelates and the clergy,[1] that divers false and perverse people of a certain new sect, of the faith, of the sacraments of the church, and the authority of the same damnably thinking, and against the law of God and of the church usurping the office of preaching, do perversely and maliciously in divers places within the said realm, under the colour of dissembled holiness, preach and teach these days openly and privily divers new doctrines, and wicked heretical

[1] "The petition and the statute are both in Latin, which is unusual in the laws of this time. In a subsequent petition of the commons this act is styled 'the statute made in the second year of your majesty's reign, at the request of the prelates and clergy of your kingdom'; which affords a presumption that it had no regular assent of parliament."—HALLAM.

[1401 A.D.]

and erroneous opinions, contrary to the same faith and blessed determinations of holy church; and of such sect and wicked doctrine and opinions they make unlawful conventicles and confederacies, they hold and exercise schools, they make and write books, they do wickedly instruct and inform people, and as much as they may excite and stir them to sedition and insurrection, and make great strife and division among the people, and other enormities horrible to be heard daily do perpetrate and commit." The "convenient remedy" for such "novelties and excesses" was that none should preach, write, or teach against the faith of holy church; that all having in their possession books or writings of such wicked doctrines and opinions should deliver them up, or be arrested and proceeded against by the diocesan; and, finally, that if any persons be before the diocesan charged with such wicked preachings and teachings, and should refuse to abjure, or after abjuration fall into relapse, they should be left to the secular court; and the sheriff of a county, or mayor or bailiffs of a city or borough, after sentence, shall receive the same persons, and every one of them, "and them, before the people, do (cause) to be burned, that such punishment may strike in fear to the minds of other."

Henry IV was no impassive tool of the persecuting churchmen. The first victim was William Salter, a London clergyman, who was burned on the 12th of February, 1401. The stake and the fagot were in full activity, till the commons shuddered at the atrocities which Englishmen had now first to endure. In the reign of Richard II the commons would not permit that the church should imprison heretics without the king's consent. Now heretics were to be burned upon the sole sentence of the ecclesiastical courts. A petition of the lords in 1406, which we have just referred to, mixes up the charges of heresy against certain preachers and teachers with the charge of publishing rumours that King Richard was alive. This alleged offence was a possible cause of the king's bitterness against them. But it was also set forth in that petition that they stirred and moved the people to take away their temporal possessions from the prelates; and, it was added, "in case that this evil purpose be not resisted by your royal majesty, it is very likely that in process of time they will also excite the people of your kingdom to take away from the lords temporal their possessions and heritages." The commons, who had also temporal possessions to lose, did not share this apprehension. They prayed Henry, in 1410, that the statute against the Lollards might be repealed, or even mitigated. He replied that he wished one more severe had been passed; and, to show how practical was his intolerance, he immediately signed a warrant for the burning of John Badby, a Lollard. The commons deeply resented the temper of the king, and refused to grant a subsidy to be levied yearly without their renewed assent.

FRANCE AND SCOTLAND

It was with no vague meaning that Shakespeare put into the mouth of Henry IV the aphorism, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." His reign was a period of continued assault and danger on every side. France and Scotland refused to recognise Henry as the sovereign of England. Their truces, they maintained, were with Richard, and not with a usurper. With France the king was anxiously desirous of peace. But the princes and nobles of France, considering the deposition of Richard as the act of the people, were craving to punish a nation which they held as the most dangerous on earth through its pride and insolence. The king of France, subject to partial

attacks of insanity, had received a terrible shock by the announcement of the events that had deprived his daughter of her queenly rank. Isabella was conducted back to Calais with ceremonies almost as magnificent as those which had attended her marriage five years before. But Henry, straitened in his finances, did not send back with her the dower which Richard had received. The duke of Orleans was for commencing hostilities against Henry. The duke of Burgundy was more cautious. These rival uncles of the insane king by their furious discords kept France in a state of disorder and terror which rendered the government incapable of any great enterprise. Bordeaux, and other parts of Gascony, were still retained by the English government, and these were attacked by the duke of Burgundy. But the people clung to the English rule.

In 1400 Henry invaded Scotland. He marched to Edinburgh, and left the usual mark of feudal royalty by burning the city. In 1402 the Scots invaded England. Henry was chasing Glendower in the land of the ancient Britons, and attributing to necromancy the ill success which courage and constancy had prepared for him. The Scottish earl of March, who had abjured his allegiance to his own sovereign, had defeated the invading Scots at Hepburn Moor. The earl Douglas came with a great army to revenge the loss. They advanced beyond the Tyne, devastating and plundering with more than usual fierceness and rapacity. But the earl of Northumberland, his son Henry Percy, and the earl of March had collected a large force in their rear, and awaited their return near Wooler. On Holyrood Day, the 14th of September, the Scots took up a strong position on Homildon Hill. The English army was placed on an opposite eminence. Percy commanded a descent into the valley; and as the Scots lined the sides of Homildon Hill, the English archers picked down their men with unerring aim, while Douglas gave no order for advance. At last the Scots charged down the steep, and the English retired a little. Again they halted, and again the deadly shafts flew so sharp and strong that few could stand up against the "iron sleet." The English men-at-arms in this battle drew not a sword. The victory was won by the terrible archers alone. Douglas and many nobles and knights were made prisoners, amongst whom was Murdoch Stewart, the son and heir of the duke of Albany, the regent of Scotland. The earl of Northumberland presented his illustrious prisoners to Henry, at Westminster, when the king exhorted Murdoch to be resigned to his captivity, for he had been taken on the battle-field like a true knight. The notion that Henry demanded the prisoners of Homildon Hill from the captors, that he might deprive them of ransom, is an error which Shakespeare derived from Hall[b] and Holinshed.[h] It is distinctly proved that Henry reserved to the captors all their rights.

THE REVOLT OF THE PERCYS

The revolt of the Percys was possibly accelerated by the refusal of Henry to ransom Sir Edmund Mortimer, whose sister had become the wife of Hotspur. But the probability is that no sudden impulses of passion excited their resistance to the authority of the man whom they had seated on the throne. The king was so unconscious of having provoked their resentment by any act of his own self-will that the very army which encountered them at Shrewsbury was led by him, "to give aid and support to his very dear and loyal cousins, the earl of Northumberland and his son Henry, in the expedition which they had honourably commenced for him and his realm against his

enemies the Scotch." But the Percys had just cause of complaint against the government of Henry, in a matter which involved no jealousy of their power which had advanced him to the throne, as Hume describes the temper of the king. The Percys had incurred great expenses in their resistance to the Scots, and the government of Henry had been unable to reimburse them.

There are letters to the king and to the council from the earl of Northumberland, in the summer of 1403, bitterly complaining of the non-payment of large sums due to him. There is a letter of the same period from Henry's son, the prince of Wales, complaining that his soldiers would not remain with him unless they were promptly paid their wages; and an order is made by the king in council, on the 10th of July, 1403, that a thousand pounds should be sent to the prince, to enable him to keep his people together. It is clear that the king was surrounded by financial embarrassments, which affected his own son as much as the Percys. He satisfied the Percys as far as he could by small payments and large promises. They probably saw in these embarrassments a symptom of the weakness of Henry's government, and believed that the revolt of Glendower would enable them, in conjunction with him, to establish a government in which they should have a more supreme power than under the rule of the politic Lancaster. They managed their plans with such caution that whilst the king was marching towards the north, expecting to join them in Northumberland, Hotspur was marching through Lancashire and Cheshire, proclaiming that Richard was alive. At Burton-on-Trent Henry heard the news of the revolt. Within a week he had fought the battle of Shrewsbury.

The prince of Wales was on the Welsh borders, and joined his forces to those of his father before the army of Henry entered Shrewsbury, on the 20th of July. Hotspur had been joined by Douglas and his Scots, and by his uncle, the earl of Worcester, with a body of Cheshire archers. Glendower was on his march from Carmarthenshire; but the rapid movement of Henry to the west brought the royal troops in the presence of the northern army before the Welsh chieftain could unite his forces with those of his confederates. Under the walls of Shrewsbury lay the insurgents. They retired a short distance to Hateley Field. The solemn defiance of the confederates was sent to Henry during the night, denouncing him and his adherents as "traitors, and subverters of the commonwealth and kingdom, and invaders, oppressors, and usurpers of the rights of the true and direct heir of England and France."

Hateley Field is about three miles from Shrewsbury. It is a plain of no large extent, with a gentle range of hills rising towards the Welsh border. On that plain, where he had fought for his life and his crown, Henry afterwards caused a chapel to be built and endowed, wherein mass might be chanted for the souls of those who died in that battle and were there interred. The mass is no longer there sung, but there is the little chapel. As we stand upon that quiet plain—looking upon the eastern Haughmond hill, "the busky hill" of Shakespeare, and listen when "the southern wind doth play the trumpet"—the words of the chronicler and the poet linger in our memories; and we think of that terrible hour when, in the words of Hall,[b] "suddenly the trumpets blew, and the king's part cried Sainct George! and the adversaries cried Esperancé! Percy! and so, furiously, the armies joined." The Northumbrian archers, who had done such terrible execution at Homildon Hill, now drew their bow-strings against their English brothers. Walsingham[f] tells us that the king's men "fell as the leaves fall on the ground after a frosty night at the approach of winter." The troops of Henry recoiled before their slaughtering arrows, and before the charge which Percy and Douglas led. The

prince of Wales was wounded by an arrow in the face; but the valiant youth continued to fight where the battle was strongest. For three hours the field was contested with an obstinacy that marked the breed of the men who were fighting against each other.

"At the last," says Hall,[b] "the king, crying, 'Saint George! Victory!' broke the array and entered into the battle of his enemies, and fought fiercely, and adventured so far into the battle that the earl Douglas struck him down, and slew Sir Walter Blunt and three others apparelled in the king's suit and clothing." The king was raised, and again "did that day many a valiant feat of arms." Hotspur at length fell; an arrow pierced his brain. His death struck a panic terror into the hearts of his brave followers. The straggling Welsh, who had joined the battle, fled to the woods and hills. The gallant Douglas was taken prisoner, and few or none of his Scots escaped alive. On that Hateley Field, where about fourteen thousand men were engaged on each side, one half were killed or wounded. The earl of Worcester, the baron of Kenderton, and Sir Richard Vernon were amongst the prisoners delivered to the king. At the market-cross of Shrewsbury, where, a hundred and twenty years before, Prince David of Wales had been executed as a traitor, Worcester, Kenderton, and Vernon paid the penalty of their revolt with the same horrible barbarities that were inflicted, for the first time, upon the brother of Llewelyn. The earl of Northumberland was marching his retainers through Durham, when he received the news of the death of his son and his brother, and of the fatal issue of the sudden revolt of his house. He hurried back to his castle of Warkworth and disbanded his men. The earl was commanded to appear before the king at York. Henry was too politic to be unnecessarily severe; and the elder Percy escaped, even without a forfeiture.

But, in the midst of this great success, the government of Henry had a constant fight to maintain against numerous enemies. The people of England were subjected to various miseries by the opposition that was raised to the Lancastrian rule. The French landed in Wales, and burned Tenby. Plymouth was burned by ships from Brittany. Devonshire was harassed by descents on the coast. Reprisals, of course, took place; and the dwellers on the French shores of the Channel had to endure the same sort of visitations. In 1404 Glendower had so successfully asserted his power that the French government concluded a treaty with him as "Owen, prince of Wales." Henry of Monmouth was doing his duty as the representative of his father in the Welsh borders. On the 11th of March, 1405, he obtained a considerable victory at Grosmont. But this success had no decisive result. The king was again about to enter Wales with a large force, when a new revolt broke out in the north of England. The earl of Northumberland, the earl of Nottingham, Lord Bardolf, and Scrope, archbishop of York, confederated to place the earl of March on the throne. He and his brother had been delivered from their honourable imprisonment at Windsor by the skilful device of the widow of Despenser, one of Richard's favourites. They were immediately retaken; and the duke of York—known by his plots and betrayal of others when Aumale and Rutland—was accused by the lady, his own sister, of being privy to the plot. The earl of Westmoreland entrapped two of the chief of the northern confederates into his hands—Scrope and Nottingham. The archbishop and the earl were beheaded. Northumberland and Bardolf escaped to Scotland.

The execution of the archbishop, which Gascoigne, the chief justice, refused to sanction—as the lay courts had no jurisdiction over a prelate—was an offence against the church, and the pope issued a temporary sentence of excom-

munication against all who had been concerned in his death. That sentence was afterwards withdrawn. There is a story which, if it rested upon good evidence, would give us a notion that Henry, in addition to his other great talents, possessed a considerable fund of humour. He charged a messenger to deliver the armour of the archbishop to the pope, with these words of the brothers of Joseph: "Lo! this have we found; know now whether it be thy son's coat, or no."[1] After the execution of Scrope and Nottingham, Henry successfully besieged Prudhoe and Warkworth, the castles of the earl of Northumberland; and took Berwick, which had been delivered by Northumberland to the Scots. The unhappy Percy and Lord Bardolf wandered about for two years, endeavouring to organise resistance to Henry's consolidating power. In 1407 there was some discontent in England, through the king's demand for subsidies; and the Percy and Bardolf then ventured into Northumberland, raised their tenantry, and risked a battle with the sheriff of Yorkshire, Sir Thomas Rokeby, at Bramham Moor, near Tadcaster. Northumberland closed his unhappy career by falling in battle; and Bardolf, after being taken prisoner, died of his wounds.

THE LAST YEARS OF HENRY IV

Thus came to an end the English insurrections against the sovereignty of Henry of Lancaster. He had held the throne for nine years against assaults that would quickly have destroyed one of mere ordinary talent and energy. His most obstinate enemy had been Owen Glendower, a man of proportionate ability and force of character. The great Welshman never yielded. In 1411 he was exempted from Henry IV's general pardon of the Welsh rebels. In 1416, Henry V, even after his great triumph of Agincourt, sought to make peace with the unconquered Owen, and to receive him into his allegiance. The circumstances of his death are not recorded. He probably sank into obscurity, and his memory was only preserved in the legends of his countrymen, which told of his wanderings on his native mountains and his hidings in sea-girt caverns. Owyn's Cave is still to be seen on the coast of Merioneth. The contest in which he was engaged was held to be a revival of the ancient feud of Briton and Saxon; for in 1431 the commons prayed that the forfeiture of the Glendower lands might be enforced, for that Owen Glendower was a traitor, whose success would have been "to the destruction of all English tongue for evermore."

The connection of the government of Henry with the quarrels and intrigues in France of the rival dukes of Orleans and Burgundy involves matters of state policy which have now but little interest. During the reign of the insane king, Charles VI, the kingdom was a prey to their rival factions. Orleans, the brother of the king, was murdered by his cousin of Burgundy in 1407, who justified the deed, and became master of the state. The revolt of his Flemish subjects required his presence, and then the Orleanists declared him a public enemy.

But John Sans-Peur was for a time too powerful to be put down. The young duke of Orleans, who had been married to Isabella, the widow of

[1] It is amusing to notice how the same story persists in cropping out again and again in the course of history. This identical story of the coat-of-mail and the pope, it will be remembered, was related in the reign of Richard I as having occurred in connection with the revolt of the warlike bishop of Beauvais. Of course it is conceivable that Henry knew of the success of Richard's action, and profited by the example. But the story is good enough to bear two relations.]

Richard II, who died in 1409, took as a second wife the daughter of the count d'Armagnac. This count became the chief of the Orleanists, who thenceforward were called the Armagnacs. The young duke of Orleans demanded justice for the death of his father. The duke of Burgundy solicited aid from the king of England, who sent him eight hundred men-at-arms and a thousand bowmen. This assistance turned the scale in favor of Burgundy. But in 1412 the Armagnacs offered better terms to Henry, by agreeing to acknowledge him as duke of Aquitaine. The two factions at last began to consider that their quarrel had become complicated, by the intervention of one who would sacrifice both to regain the ancient power of the English in France. They agreed upon a peace. But Henry sent an army into Normandy under his second son, the duke of Clarence, who ravaged Maine and Anjou, and finally retired to Gascony, having received a large payment as the cost of his expedition.

The kingly and parental relations of Henry IV with the prince of Wales, during the latter years of this reign, have been variously described upon very imperfect information. It is extremely difficult to speak of the character of Henry of Monmouth without taking some colour from the most effective painter of character that all literature has produced. Hallam[g] says: "The virtues of the prince of Wales are almost invidiously eulogised by those parliaments who treat harshly his father; and these records afford a strong presumption that some early petulance or riot has been much exaggerated by the vulgar minds of our chroniclers." Shakespeare rescued the prince from the imputation of low debauchery by surrounding him with an atmosphere of wit, and by exhibiting his compunction for misspent hours in the midst of his revelries. Here we may leave the consideration of the prince's private character, without believing that it is much sullied even by the somewhat doubtful story of his having struck the chief justice of England.

But his public conduct, after he attained his majority in 1409, requires a brief notice. In 1410 he was made captain of Calais, and president of the council. In the capacity of president he is often found acting; and perhaps in his official position he witnessed the burning of John Badby for heresy, and offered him a yearly stipend if he would recant. But it would appear from some official records that the prince had an authority which was scarcely compatible with the jealous character of his father. Henry IV was in failing health, and the son was naturally at hand to assist in the public service. But records which state that certain business was transacted "in the presence of the king and of his son the prince" indicate a species of divided authority which might end in disunion. Hardyng,[i] the rhyming chronicler, says·

> The king discharged the prince from his counsail,
> And set my lord Sir Thomas in his stead
> Chief of council, for the king's more avail.

Stow[d] says that the prince's great popularity induced the king to believe that he intended to usurp the crown; but that the prince, coming to his father with a large body of lords and gentlemen, whom he would not suffer to advance beyond the fire in the hall, declared that his life was not so desirable to him that he should wish to live one day under his father's displeasure. Then the king embraced him with tears, and said: "My right dear and heartily beloved son, it is of truth that I had you partly suspect, and, as I now perceive, undeserved on your part: I will have you no longer in distrust for any reports that shall be made unto me. And thereof I assure you, upon my honour." Henry IV died on the 20th of March, 1413, in his forty-seventh year.

HENRY V AND THE LOLLARDS

Henry V was proclaimed king on the 21st of March, 1413. He was crowned at Westminster on the 9th of April, being then in the twenty-fifth year of his age. A parliament, having been summoned by writ, met at Westminster on the 15th of May. There was nothing very noteworthy in its proceedings. The king met his lords and commons with an aspect of love and conciliation. He had taken not only the most generous, but the most prudent resolution towards those who had been considered dangerous to his house. He restored the son of Henry Percy to his family inheritance, and he liberated the earl of March from prison.

There were dangers, however, at home which the magnanimity of the king was not calculated to avert. The execrable laws against the preachers of the "new doctrines" had not prevented the tenets of Wycliffe from spreading through the nation and beyond the narrow bounds of the island. It was a period of alarm for popes and prelates, and for all those who considered that the church was properly built upon a foundation of worldly riches and dominion. John Huss, a Bohemian priest, had become acquainted with the writings of Wycliffe, and he boldly preached the same doctrines as early as 1405. In 1414 the council of Constance held its first sitting, and Huss was summoned before it to declare his opinions. The brave man knew that he went at the risk of his life. He died at the stake in 1415. The same council decreed that the body of Wycliffe should be "taken from the ground and thrown far away from the burial of any church." It was thirteen years before this miserable vengeance was carried into effect, by disinterring and burning the first English reformer's body and throwing his ashes into a brook. "The brook," says Fuller,[n] "did convey his ashes into Avon; Avon into Severn; Severn into the narrow seas; they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over."

But in the first year of Henry V the prelates sought to strike a more effectual terror into the followers of Wycliffe than could be accomplished by any insult to his memory. They resolved to take measures against one of the most powerful supporters of the Lollards, Sir John Oldcastle, called Lord Cobham. He had been the friend of the king when prince of Wales; and Henry, in the honest desire, as we may believe, to avert the consequences of ecclesiastical vengeance, tried to induce Oldcastle to recant. He was inflexible, and the king then caused him to be arrested. On the 25th of September the undaunted knight was brought before the synod, and there pleaded his cause with a vigour and ability which have made him memorable amongst the martyrs of the Reformation. He was condemned as a heretic, and was handed over to the secular power. The king granted his ancient friend a respite of fifty days from the fiery penalty which awaited him; and during that period Oldcastle escaped from his prison in the Tower. The danger to which their leader had been exposed, and the severities which appeared preparing for those who held to their conscientious opinions, precipitated the Lollards into a movement which made the state as anxious for their suppression as was the church. Rumours went forth of a fearful plot to destroy all religion and law in England, and, in the overthrow of king, lords, and clergy, to make all property in common. There can be little doubt that this rumoured plot was a gross exaggeration of some indiscreet assemblies for the purpose of petition.

It was stated that in the fields of St. Giles, stretching to the Hampstead and Highgate hills, twenty-five thousand insurgents were to meet under the command of Sir John Oldcastle. At midnight of the 7th of January, 1414, the king went forth from the city gates with a mighty array, to encounter this army of desperate rebels. He found about eighty persons. Others were surprised near Hornsey. Many of these unfortunate people were immediately executed; and Sir Roger Acton, a friend of Oldcastle, also suffered on the 10th of February. Henry proclaimed that the insurgents meant to destroy him and his brothers, to divide the realm into districts, and to elect Sir John Oldcastle president. These allegations appear too extravagant not to lead us to the belief that the conspiracy, if conspiracy there were, had for its sole object the mitigation of the penal laws against the preachers and receivers of Wycliffe's doctrines. Within a few months a pardon was proclaimed to all the Lollards for the conspiracy, excepting Oldcastle and eleven others. Still prosecutions went on; and it is remarkable that the king pardoned many so prosecuted, after they had been convicted. The general body of Lollards were grievously punished for the indiscretion of some of their number. A new statute was passed, giving all judges and magistrates power to arrest all persons suspected of Lollardism, binding them by oath to do their utmost to root up the heresy; and enacting that, in addition to capital punishment, the lands and goods of such convicted heretics should be forfeited to the king. It was three years before the vengeance of the church fell on Oldcastle. He was taken in 1418, while Henry was in France, and was burned, under the declaration of the archbishop and his provincial synod that he was an incorrigible heretic.

HENRY V AND FRANCE

The factions of the Burgundians and Armagnacs were carrying on their desolating contests in France, when Henry V came to the throne. Henry IV had endeavoured to avail himself of their distractions by siding with one or the other party as best suited his policy. His son adopted a bolder course. When the Treaty of Bretigny was violated by the French, Edward III reassumed the title of king of France, and went to war again to assert his pretended right. There had been several renewed truces between the two kingdoms, but no pacification, and no decided settlement of the contested claims. The unhappy condition of the French nation was an encouragement to the ambition of the young king of England, who had been trained from his earliest years in war and policy. An embassy was sent to Paris to negotiate for a prolongation of the truce.

Then was suggested a pacification, by the marriage of Henry of England with Catherine, the youngest daughter of the insane Charles VI. It was also proposed to the duke of Burgundy that his daughter should be queen of England. But the Orleanists were now supreme. Within a year from his accession Henry suddenly put in a claim to the crown of France, in renewal of the old claim of Edward III. Upon the rejection of this claim the king of England made demands far more unreasonable than were agreed to by his great-grandfather, when the Peace of Bretigny was concluded. The French government consented to give up all the ancient territories of the duchy of Aquitaine, and to marry the daughter of Charles VI to Henry, with a dowry of 600,000 crowns. An embassy was sent to France, when the amount of the proposed dowry was increased to 800,000 crowns; and the demand of Henry for the cession of Normandy, Maine, and Anjou was rejected. The French then sent an embassy to England, when Henry demanded Normandy and all

[1415 A.D.]

the territories ceded by the Peace of Bretigny, under the threat that he would otherwise take arms to enforce his claim to the crown of France. On the 16th of April, 1415, he announced at a great council his determination to recover "his inheritance." He had previously obtained a supply from parliament "for the defence of the kingdom of England and the safety of the seas"; and the supply was thus limited, although the king had avowed his intention to that parliament of making a claim to the kingdom of France. Historians are of opinion that the lords spiritual, with the new archbishop, Chicheley, as their organ, had urged the king to this decision, to divert the attention of the people from those questions of the doctrine and discipline of the church which had become so formidable. The probability is that, Henry having become an instrument in their hands for putting down by terror those new doctrines which had spread from England to the Continent, they were ready in return to gratify his personal ambition by advocating his designs upon France.[c]

HENRY V OF ENGLAND

The character of Henry's enterprise is often misunderstood. It is said that, whatever claim Edward III might have had to the crown of France, Henry V could have none. It is said that according to Edward III's doctrine, by which the right to the crown might pass through females to the male representatives, the rights of Edward III had passed to Roger, earl of March. So, as a matter of genealogy, they certainly had, and as a matter of genealogy there was doubtless an inconsistency in the use of the French title by Henry IV and Henry V. But the true way of looking at the matter is that both the Peace of Bretigny and the truce made in the latter years of Richard II had been broken by the French, that the war was going on at Henry's accession, and that all that Henry V did was to throw the whole national power, guided by his own genius, into its prosecution.[k]

At a council on the 17th of April the king appointed his brother, the duke of Bedford, to be lieutenant of the kingdom during his absence. The next day he declared what should be the payment for the lords and knights who should be retained for his voyage to France, with the daily payment of each man-at-arms and each archer. The rate of pay was, for a duke, 13s. 4d. per day; for an earl, 6s. 8d.; for a baron, 4s.; for a knight, 2s.; for every other man-at-arms, 1s.; and for an archer, 6d. Great nobles and others contracted to furnish large bodies of troops at this rate, well and sufficiently mounted, armed, and arrayed. But the first quarter's wages were required to be paid in advance, and pledges were given for the payment of the second quarter. Contracts were made for carpenters and other artisans, for wagons, and bows and arrows. The king pledged jewels for the performance of some of these contracts, and he raised large sums as loans upon jewels and plate. Ships and sailors were impressed. Surgeons were provided. Many officers of the

royal household were to attend upon the king, with no fewer than fifteen minstrels. On the 18th of June Henry set out for Westminster, going in procession to St. Paul's, accompanied by the mayor and citizens in their guilds. At Winchester he awaited the arrival of an embassy from France. According to one French historian, Laboureur, Henry haggled about terms in the spirit of a usurer. The archbishop of Bourges, who was of the embassy, is accused by our chroniclers of having replied to the king with improper boldness. Neither concession nor plain-speaking would avail. The ambassadors returned to Paris on the 26th of July, and reported that all Henry's peaceable professions covered malice and dissimulation.

CORBELS

(Eltham Palace. A favourite royal residence from Henry III to Henry VIII)

On the 24th of July the king made his will, concluding with these words in his own autograph: "This is my last will, subscribed with my own hand, R. H. Jesu Mercy and gremercy Ladie Marie help." Within a day or two a conspiracy against him was discovered, which, according to some accounts, was instigated by the French court. The conspirators were the king's cousin, Richard earl of Cambridge, brother to the duke of York (Rutland); Lord Scrope, who was Henry's familiar friend; and Sir Thomas Grey of Heton. A jury was summoned for their trial by the sheriff of Southampton, who found Cambridge and Grey guilty of treason, and Scrope of having concealed the knowledge of their purposes. Cambridge and Scrope claimed to be tried by their peers. By the lords then at Southampton, who formed a court for their trial, they were convicted, and they suffered death on the 5th of August. Grey had been previously executed.

RENEWAL OF THE FRENCH WAR

The truce with France expired on the 2d of August (1415). On the beach of Southampton are collected men-at-arms, mounted archers, foot-archers, miners, gunners, armourers, and all the various attendants of a feudal army. There, under the walls of the old castle, shallow vessels float up to the river's banks, and with little preparation horses and men step on to the crowded decks. Fifteen hundred of such vessels are gathered together, and drift with the tide to the broader Solent. Fifteen hundred sails to bear an army slowly and insecurely to Normandy—an army that would have been carried with far greater speed and safety by thirty of such vessels as now steam from that Southampton river. The king is at Portchester castle. On the 10th of August, being Saturday, he goes on board his own ship, *The Trinity*, lying between Southampton and Portsmouth. On Sunday they put to sea. On Tuesday, about noon, the royal ship enters the mouth of the Seine, and the fleet casts anchor about three miles from Harfleur.

The army landed in small boats, and took up a position on the hill nearest Harfleur. No resistance was offered to the landing. The constable of France, D'Albret, was at Rouen, with a large number of troops. But he stirred not. The hardy people of the coast suffered the English to leap on their shores, as

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if they came in peace and friendship. The landing-place was rough with large stones, and there was a dike and wall between the shore and the marsh towards the town. The entrance into the marsh was very difficult, and "the resistance of the smallest number of people would have sufficed to drive back many thousands." The army rested in its position till Saturday, the 17th, and then moved to the siege of Harfleur. The town was surrounded with embattled walls, and with ditches filled to a great depth and breadth by the waters of the Seine. There were three gates, strongly defended by bulwarks. After the landing of Henry the garrison was reinforced on the side which the English had not then invested. But the town was very quickly encompassed on all sides, the duke of Clarence having made a circuitous march and taken a position on the hill opposite to that which the king occupied. The port was strictly blockaded towards the sea. After a demand for the surrender of the place, which was stoutly refused, the siege commenced. We now hear of guns as well as engines in an English siege. There is a belief that cannon had been employed at Crécy; and some sort of ordnance had certainly been occasionally in use in the middle of the fourteenth century. At Harfleur the king battered the bulwarks, and the walls and towers on every side, by the stones which his guns and engines cast. Two attempts were made to undermine the town; but there were counter-mines, and the miners met and fought underground.

The siege went on with varying fortune; but the besieged showed no symptom of surrender. Disease now began to make frightful ravages in the English camp. Henry's men were perishing around him by dysentery, and he resolved to storm the town. The garrison, however, agreed to surrender on the 22d of September, if they were not previously relieved. No relief came. The civil distractions of France had at first deprived the government of all energy. There was no preparation for resistance. There was no money in the royal treasury. Suddenly a tax was imposed, and the impost was collected from the clergy and the people by armed men. "What can the English do more to us?" exclaimed the unhappy victims of misrule. Harfleur was yielded up on that 22nd of September, with great ceremony. Henry sat upon a throne under a pavilion of silk, erected on the hill opposite the town. From the pavilion to Harfleur a line of English soldiers was formed; and through their ranks came the governor with a deputation, and he laid the keys of the town at the feet of the king. The siege had lasted thirty-six days. On the 23d Henry entered the town, and went barefoot to the church of St. Martin, to offer a solemn thanksgiving for his success. The bulk of the inhabitants—women, children, and poor—were compelled to depart, but without any indignity; and the principal burghers, with many knights and gentlemen, were allowed to leave the place, making oath to surrender themselves at Calais in the following November. Henry now sent a challenge to the dauphin of France to meet him in single combat—the old, unmeaning defiance of chivalry. On the 5th of October the king held a council. The success at Harfleur had been bought at a terrible cost. Besides a large number killed in the siege, a much greater number of the army had died of dysentery in that district of overflowing marshes. Five thousand more were so sick that they were unable to proceed. Many had deserted. Comparing the various accounts of contemporary chroniclers, it is "morally impossible to form any other conclusion," says Sir N. H. Nicolas,[1] "than that the English army which quitted Harfleur did not exceed nine thousand fighting men."[1]

[1] All known documents relating to the battle of Agincourt and all contemporary narratives were collected in a volume entitled *History of the Battle of Agincourt*, by Sir N. Harris

At the council of the 5th of October Henry was strongly urged to return, with the remnant of his force, to England by sea. He was told that "the multitude of the French were continually increasing, and very likely might hem them in on every side, as sheep in pens." So writes the priest; and he adds that the king determined to march to Calais, "relying upon the divine grace and the righteousness of his cause, piously considering that victory consists not in multitudes."

It is easy to blame Henry for this determination; to call it "rashness, and total recklessness of consequences"; but it must not be forgotten that if the king had returned to England with the loss of two thirds of his army, and with no success but the capture of a town that could not long be held, he risked the loss of that popular support which the general belief in his intrepidity had won for him from his early years. He had set his life upon a cast, and he must play out the game. On the 8th of October he commenced his extraordinary march. With eight days' provisions the little army went forth from Harfleur, in three battalions, on the road to Calais. Henry's policy was an honourable exception to the devastation which accompanied the marches of the great Edward and the Black Prince. He published a proclamation that no one, under pain of death, should burn, lay waste, or take anything, excepting victuals and necessaries." The line of march was at no great distance from the coast towards the Somme. Passing by Fécamp, the army reached Arques, near Dieppe, on the 11th. A few shots were fired from the castle, but the passage through the town was not contested. The English began to believe that they should reach Calais without molestation. "For some firmly asserted," says the observant priest, "that considering the civil discord and deadly hatred subsisting between the French princes and the duke of Burgundy, the French would not draw themselves out from the interior parts of the country and their strongholds, lest, while thus drawing themselves out, the forces of the duke of Burgundy should either follow them or against their will usurp the possession of their estates."

At Eu the English army was attacked, but the assailants were repulsed without difficulty. On Sunday, the 13th, they reached Abbeville. Now the imminent danger that was before this daring band was too manifest to be concealed. The chroniclers of his great-grandfather's exploits had made Henry familiar with the circumstances of his passage of the Somme. To the ford of Blanquetaque an English army was again led. The causeway leading to the ford was broken down, and a great body of French was said to be collected on the opposite bank of the river. Without any certain information, Henry directed his march by the Somme above Abbeville, seeking for another passage. The bridges and causeways were all destroyed, and broad marshes added to the difficulty of finding a ford. The slender stock of provisions was now becoming exhausted. After a march of seven days they passed Amiens, and slept that night at the village of Boves. It was the time of vintage, and there was abundance of wine in open casks and a little bread. The supply of wine was as dangerous to the safety of the army as its privations, and Henry forbade his men to fill their bottles. It was the 17th of October before they reached a plain near Corbie. Here the king executed a soldier who had stolen the pix out of a church—an incident which Shakespeare has not overlooked. Here, too, he gave the famous order that each archer should provide himself with a stake, sharpened at each end, to plant in the ground when about to be attacked by cavalry. On the 18th they were quartered

Nicolas (1827). The account of Knight here presented is based largely on the contemporary narrative of a priest, printed by Nicolas.]

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near Nesle, a walled town about twenty-four miles above Amiens and four miles from the nearest part of the Somme. Here the welcome news was brought that a ford had been discovered. Before the river could be reached a marsh had to be crossed. The position was one of danger, and there was no choice but to make for the river at all hazards. There were two fords, approached by narrow causeways, partly destroyed. The damaged portions were filled up with broken doors and windows from the neighbouring houses. The king was indefatigable in his personal exertions, superintending the repair of the causeways, and the orderly passage of men and horses. It was dark before the whole army had crossed. "We passed a joyful night," says the priest, "in the next farm-houses, which had been left by the French on our first arrival over the water."

THE BATTLE OF AGINCOURT (1415 A.D.)

The English army had been for a month investing Harfleur before the French government was roused from its inactivity. On the 10th of September the king of France took the Oriflamme at St. Denis, and departed for Normandy. He had arrived at Rouen with his son when the news of the fall of Harfleur reached the court. He was soon surrounded by princes and great lords with their men-at-arms. It was known that the constable of France was watching the passages of the Somme, and that the English, in ascending the left bank, were sustaining great privations. The weather was wet and tempestuous. The princes and nobles believed they had now nothing to dread from the presumption of King Henry. The citizens of Paris offered to send six thousand men well armed. The old duke de Berri, who had fought at Poitiers sixty years before, urged the acceptance of the offer. The duke of Alençon and the young chivalry would have nothing to do with these common people. "What do we want of these shopkeepers? We have already three times the number of the English."

The princes sent to Henry three officers of arms, to tell him that, being resolved to fight him, they desired him to name a day and a place for the battle. The king of England replied that, having set out from his town of Harfleur, he was on his way to England, and that, resting in no town or fortress, they might find him any day and hour in the open field. Onward marched Henry by Péronne, the roads being found trodden "as if the French had gone before him in many thousands." On the 24th—the fourth day after they had crossed the Somme—the English army arrived at Blangy, in perfect discipline. A branch of the Canche, the Ternoise, was here crossed without difficulty. The French army was on the rising ground about a league distant. From Blangy there is a gentle ascent towards the village of Maisoncelle. "When we reached the top of the hill," says the priest, "we saw three columns of the French emerge from the upper part of the valley, about a mile from us; who at length being formed into battalions, companies, and troops, in multitudes compared with us, halted a little more than half a mile opposite to us, filling a very wide field, as if with an innumerable host of locusts—a moderate-sized valley being betwixt us and them." Nothing can be more accurate than this description of the locality. We have stood upon this ascent, having left the little river and the bridge of Blangy about a mile distant. Looking back, there is a range of gentle hills to the east, in the direction of St. Pol, from which the French army marched. Emerging "from the upper part of the valley," the French army would fill "a very wide field"—the plain of Agin-

court. When Henry had crossed the river and ascended the hill, he expected instant battle. He formed his troops, and went about exhorting them to do their duty. Walter Hungerford, according to our good priest's account, regretted that they had not with them ten thousand English archers. The solemn answer of the king, relying upon God for victory, has been given by the priest. Other burning words—the version of the poet—have superseded the dialogue of the chroniclers.

The sun was setting, and there was no attack. At Maisoncelle, now a long straggling village amidst trees, about a mile and a half from Blangy, the king took up his quarters for the night. In the gloomy twilight "a white way" had been found to this village. The noise of the French was heard as they took up their quarters, each vociferating for his servant or his comrade. Henry commanded the strictest silence. It was a night of dread to those who knew how many thousand enemies were close at hand. There was little sleep. The armourers were at work; the priests were confessing their penitents. In the French camp the confident knights played at dice, the stakes being the ransoms of their expected prisoners.

The route to Calais lay through the plain of Agincourt. The village of Agincourt now consists of a number of straggling mud-built cottages, and a farm or two, with a church of the beginning of the last century. It is covered by a wood towards the plain. Opposite Agincourt is another village, Tramecourt, also covered by a wood. The plain of Agincourt is a considerable table-land, now fully cultivated, and expanding into an open country after we have passed between the two woods. The village of Maisoncelle is about a mile from this field. Henry rose with the dawn on that 25th of October, the feast of St. Crispin, and he heard three masses. He was fully armed, and he wore a crown on his head of extraordinary magnificence. He mounted a small gray horse, and drew up his men upon the open ground near Maisoncelle, then covered with young corn. His little band was formed in one line, the men-at-arms in the centre, with wings on the left and right, the archers being posted between the wings, with their stakes fixed before them. A party that went into the village of Agincourt found no armed men there. Another party of archers was concealed in the village of Tramecourt. The French army was in three lines, completely covering the route to Calais. The advanced guard of about eight thousand knights and esquires, and fifty-five hundred archers and cross-bowmen, was composed of the greater part of the French nobility. The main body was crowded in prodigious numbers, the lines, according to the lowest estimate, being twenty men in depth. The men-at-arms wore coats of steel reaching to their knees, and heavy leg-armour, with other encumbering panoply.

The contemporary chroniclers, both French and English, differ greatly as to the number of the French army. The lowest estimate is fifty thousand fighting men; the highest, one hundred and fifty thousand. The probability is that they were ten times as many as the English. Their position was between the two woods of Agincourt and Tramecourt, in a space much too confined for the movements of such a vast body. The woods as they at present exist show that the position was a disadvantageous one; and it was probably more disadvantageous if the woods were then more extensive. The two armies passed several hours without a movement on either side. According to Monstrelet,[1] Sir Thomas Erpingham, a knight grown gray with age and honour, at last flung his truncheon in the air, and called "*Nestrocque!*" ("Now strike!") and then dismounted, as the king and others had done. The English then knelt down, invoking the protection of God; and each man put a small

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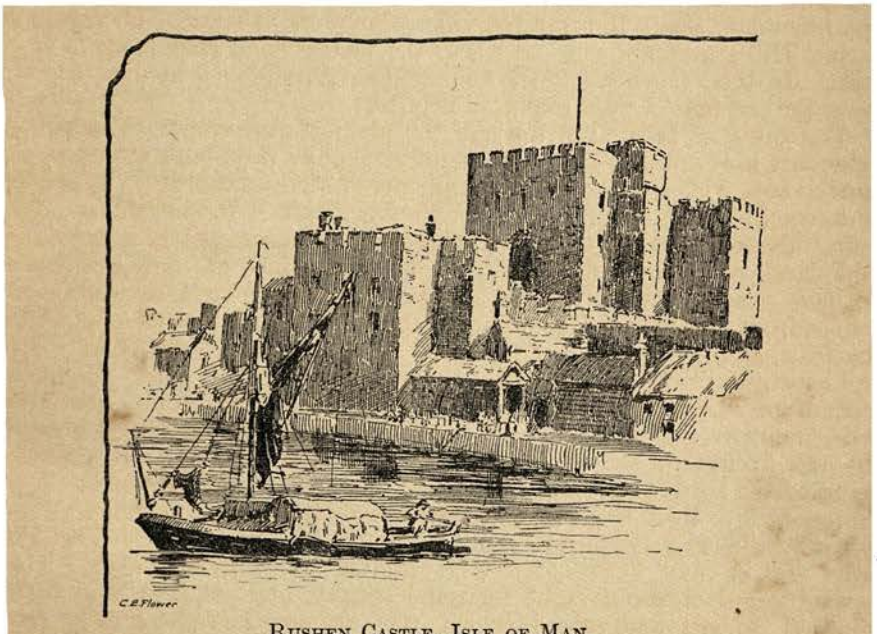
piece of earth into his mouth, in remembrance that they were formed of dust, and to dust should return. Shouting the national "Hurrah!" they kept advancing. The archers, without armour, in jackets and loose hose, some even barefoot, went boldly on to meet the mailed chivalry. Their bow-strings were drawn. The French stooped as the deadly shafts flew amongst them. Many were slain. Onward rushed the thousands of horsemen to break the line of the hardy yeomen. The sharpened stakes were planted in the earth, and the archers shrank not from the charge. The arrows again flew; and, the horses becoming unmanageable from their wounds, the knights were driven back upon the van, which they threw into confusion.

The king now advanced with his main body. A deadly conflict ensued. The archers threw away their bows, and fought with sword and bill. The second French line was soon reached; and here again the contest became more



RUSHEN CASTLE, ISLE OF MAN
(Thirteenth century)

a slaughter than a battle. The enormous numbers of the French were the chief cause of their destruction. Their heavy armour was an encumbrance instead of a defence. The rear division, after the overthrow of the first and second divisions, took to flight. In three hours this terrible fight was over. The priest, who was "sitting on horseback among the baggage, in the rear of the battle," thus describes the slaughter of the French on this day of Agincourt: "When some of them in the engagement had been killed, and fell in the front, so great was the undisciplined violence and pressure of the multitude behind that the living fell over the dead, and others also, falling on the living, were slain; so that, in three places, where the force and host of our standards were, so great grew the heap of the slain, and of those who were overthrown among them, that our people ascended the very heaps, which had increased higher than a man, and butchered the adversaries below with swords, axes, and other weapons. And when at length, in two or three hours,

that front battle was perforated and broken up, and the rest were driven to flight, our men began to pull down the heaps, and to separate the living from the dead, proposing to keep the living as slaves, to be ransomed."

Few were left alive for ransom. A clamour arose that the French, collecting in various parts of the field, were coming upon the wearied victors. The baggage, according to Monstrelet, was being plundered. In the momentary alarm Henry commanded a massacre of all the prisoners. The French chroniclers mention this horrible circumstance in terms of sorrow rather than of blame. The hasty instinct of self-preservation dictated the order. The day before the battle the king had discharged, upon their parole, all the prisoners he had brought with him. His nature was not cruel. He stopped the carnage when he found that the danger was imaginary.

On the part of the English, the duke of York and the earl of Oxford were slain, with some hundreds of inferior degree. The estimates of this loss are very conflicting. The English chronicles make it absurdly small. Monstrelet[l] says the loss of the English was sixteen hundred; and so Lefebvre de Saint Remy,[m] another French historian. Of the chivalry of France, the flower perished. Seven of the princes of the blood had fallen. With the duke of Alençon Henry had fought in person, and was beaten down, having a portion of his crown struck off. The king could not save his gallant enemy, who fell before Henry's guards. Eight thousand gentlemen of France perished in that field of carnage, of whom a hundred and twenty were nobles bearing banners.

The herald of France was taken in the battle. "Montjoie," said Henry, "to whom is the victory—to me or to the king of France?" "To you, and not to him," said Montjoie. "And how is this castle called?" "The castle of Agincourt." "Well," said the king, "they will long speak of the battle of Agincourt." They will speak of it as long as England's history endures, as one of the most wonderful examples of bravery, and fortitude, and heroic daring, of which a people may be justly proud. But they will also speak of it as a fearful sacrifice of human life to a false ambition, which had no object beyond the assertion of an indomitable will, and no permanent results beyond the perpetuation of hatred and jealousy between nation and nation. Henry slept that night of the 25th of October at Maisoncelle. On the next day he, with the duke of Orleans and many other noble prisoners, went his unmolested way to Calais.

THE SECOND FRENCH EXPEDITION

The great victory of Agincourt was publicly known in London on the 29th of October, the same day on which King Henry reached Calais. "Early in the morning," says a contemporary chronicle, "came tidings to London while that men were in their beds, that the king had fought and had the battle and the field aforesaid. And anon as they had tidings thereof, they went to all the churches of the city of London and rang all the bells of every church." Henry remained at Calais till the 17th of November. There was time for this news to go forth through the country before the arrival of the king; and the people warmed up into a fervour of joy which drowned the lament for the thousands that had perished during those past three months of sickness, want, and slaughter.

When the king's ship, after a boisterous passage, sailed into the port of Dover, the people rushed into the sea and bore their hero to the shore. At the royal manor of Eltham he rested on his way to London, which he entered

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in solemn procession on the 23d of November. From Blackheath to Westminster he was escorted by twenty thousand of the citizens, "with devices according to their crafts." The great highway of Cheap, after the cavalcade had passed London bridge, was so crowded by the people that the horsemen could scarcely pass through them. The city was gorgeous with arches, and towers, and pavilions, out of which innumerable virgins and youths showered laurel boughs and leaves of gold upon the conqueror's head, and sang English anthems with melodious voices, and with organs. The busy priest, as observant of the splendid pageant as of the terrible battle, says: "The lattices and windows on both sides were filled with the most noble ladies and women of the realm, and with honourable and honoured men, who flocked together to the pleasing sight, and were so very gracefully and elegantly dressed, in garments of gold, fine linen, and crimson, and various other apparel, that a greater assembly, or a nobler spectacle, was not recollected to have been ever before in London." He goes on to say: "The king himself, amidst these public expressions of praise, and the bravery of the citizens, passed along, clad in a purple robe, not with lofty looks, pompous horses, or great multitude, but with a solid aspect, a reverend demeanour, and a few of his faithful domestics attendant on him; the dukes, earls, and marshals, his captives, following him with a guard of soldiers."

In 1416 Henry was continuing to cherish his ambitious projects, and was preparing for their accomplishment. The attempted mediation of the emperor Sigismund, who visited England, had been unsuccessful. The war was carried on in Normandy, and the French made descents on the English shores of the Channel. Harfleur was besieged in June, and the English garrison was reduced to the greatest distress, when it was relieved from blockade by the capture of the large carracks and other vessels that kept the mouth of the Seine. Meanwhile, Henry had secured the alliance of the duke of Burgundy, who had laid aside his resentment for the death of his brother, the duke of Brabant, at Agincourt. It is unnecessary for us to attempt any minute description of the distractions of France, which presented the chief encouragement to the king of England to persevere in his design to claim the crown. The feuds of the Burgundians and the Armagnacs were as violent as ever, and were accompanied by the most intolerable oppression of the people by the reigning faction under the constable, Armagnac. The insane king passed his life in fatuous indifference to all around him; and the court of the queen exhibited a licentious profusion, the more disgusting from its contrast with the universal wretchedness. It is recorded that Henry, after the day of Agincourt, addressing his prisoner, the duke of Orleans, disclaimed any merit in his great victory, and expressed his belief that he was the instrument of God in punishing the crimes of the French nation—the public disorders, and the private wickedness. This was one of the ordinary delusions of ambition.

There was no improvement in the condition of France when, on the 23d of July, 1417, the king of England again embarked with a mighty army at Southampton. It was more numerous and more powerfully equipped than the force which two years before had landed in Normandy, consisting of forty thousand men, with miners and ordnance. At this crisis, the duke of Burgundy was marching upon Paris, resolved upon the extermination of the faction which held the government. Henry landed at Toucques, near Harfleur, and shortly after went on to besiege Caen, which city was taken by assault on the 4th of September. Many other fortresses in Normandy speedily submitted, and Henry went into winter quarters. The French government,

distracted with the movements of the duke of Burgundy, made no effectual resistance to the English. Henry continued to secure one fortress after another, and, holding his court at Caen, confiscated the estates of Norman lords and bestowed them upon his English followers.

The summer of 1418 was a terrible season for France. The duke of Burgundy had retreated from before Paris in the previous year; for his partisans in the city had been expelled, and the count d'Armagnac had the young dauphin, Charles, in his hands, as well as the unhappy king. The queen had been deprived of her power as regent, and had been sent as a prisoner to Tours. Suddenly the duke of Burgundy appeared before Tours, delivered the queen from captivity, and received from her the appointment of governor-general of the kingdom. The rule of the count d'Armagnac had been one of severity and terror, and the Parisians had fallen off from his faction and now anxiously desired his overthrow. At the end of May there was a fearful massacre of the Armagnacs by an infuriated Paris mob, and many of them were held as prisoners. On the 12th of June there was a cry that the terrible duke was at the gates; but the people shouted for Burgundy, and, breaking open the prisons and private houses where the Armagnacs were confined, massacred fifteen hundred victims in one morning. Amongst them was the count d'Armagnac.

On the 14th of July the queen and the duke of Burgundy entered Paris in triumph. The appetite for blood was not yet sated, and for some days the new government made a profession of stopping the murders, but contrived to remove those persons who were most obnoxious to them. The duke of Orleans, whilst these horrible butcheries were perpetrated by a fickle multitude upon the party of which he was the real head, was shut up in the castle of Pontefract. He solaced his long captivity in England by the composition of verses which entitle him to rank amongst the best French poets of his age; and he also wrote *chansons* in English, with elegance and facility. Henry was not disposed to trust to the pacific occupations of his prisoner, as a guarantee that he would not be a troublesome enemy. There is a letter of this period in which the king enjoins his strict keeping, without going to any disport, "for it is better he lack his disport than we be deceived."

SIEGE OF ROUEN (1419 A.D.)

While these fearful scenes had been acted in Paris, King Henry sat down with the main body of his army before Rouen. In the previous winter terms of peace had been proposed to him by the French government at Paris, and also on the part of the dauphin, afterwards Charles VII. But these negotiations were unavailing. The siege of Rouen was as prolific in horrors as any other event of that sanguinary period. The rule of Henry in lower Normandy, which he had nearly conquered, was mild and conciliating. He abolished the odious tax on salt, and set a limit to illegal exactions. But the people of Rouen, into which city large numbers of armed men had been thrown under the command of chiefs who had retired before Henry, resolved to resist the progress of the invader. The king had crossed the Seine at Pont de l'Arche; but when he invested the city on the 30th of July, he found a garrison ready to make sorties upon his troops and compel them to fight for every position which they took up. He set about the reduction of the place upon a system far more efficacious than any sudden assault. On the land side he dug deep ditches, and he fortified his lines with towers and artillery. The land approach

was completely blockaded. The islands of the Seine above Rouen were filled by him with troops. The stream was barricaded with iron chains, and immediately above the town he formed a bridge of boats manned with archers. He soon compelled the surrender of the castle on the hill of St. Catherine. Below Rouen he commanded the navigation of the Seine by his armed vessels, and the mouth of the river was guarded by a powerful fleet.

For twenty weeks the devoted people beheld the gradual approach of famine. The population consisted of a hundred and fifty thousand souls; some chroniclers say three hundred thousand. In that city of ancient narrow streets, where still remain many gloomy houses of the period, whose quaint gables and rude carvings are dear to the artist and the antiquary, was this wretched population, with all the resources of their accustomed industry cut off, shut up to starve. "And ever they of the town hoped to have been rescued, but it would not be: and many hundreds died for hunger, for they had eaten all their cats, horses, hounds, rats, mice, and all that might be eaten; and ofttimes the men-at-arms driving out the poor people at the gates of the city, for spending of victual, anon our men drove them in again; and young children lay dead in the streets, hanging on the dead mothers' paps, that pity was to see." At last the garrison surrendered on the 19th of January, 1419, and the soldiers marched forth without arms, engaging not to serve against the king for one year. One of the noblest cities of France thus came under the English rule, and here Henry built a palace, and held his court as duke of Normandy. The people of Rouen had been promised effectual relief both by the duke of Burgundy and by the dauphin, but no succour came. The French princes were more intent upon circumventing each other than on organising a national resistance; and Henry haughtily proclaimed that he was called to reign over France as a true king, and that it was the blessing of God which had inspired him to come into a distracted kingdom, that its sovereignty might be transferred to capable hands.

There were two authorities in France who refused to unite in repulsing their common enemy. The dauphin held a court and parliament at Poitiers; the duke of Burgundy ruled at Paris. In the mean time Henry continued to advance towards the capital. A truce was at length concluded by him with the duke of Burgundy, and it was agreed that the king of France and the king of England should have a meeting. In July, 1419, the queen, the princess Catherine, and the duke of Burgundy came, without the king, to Meulan on the Seine; and here Henry met them, with great state on either side. The queen expected that the beauty of her daughter would have disarmed the sternness of the English king; but although he professed himself anxious for an alliance with a lady so fair and gracious, he demanded the complete execution of the treaty of Bretigny, the cession of Normandy, and the absolute sovereignty of all the countries surrendered. The negotiations were again broken off. The dauphin and the duke of Burgundy now made some show of reconciliation, and within a week after the conference at Meulan they agreed to terms of union. With the same boldness as he displayed when met by divided counsels, Henry marched on towards Paris, now that he was assured that the two rival powers of France were united. The dauphin and the duke had parted with demonstrations of mutual respect—the dauphin to proceed to Touraine, the duke to join King Charles at Pontoise. On the 23d the king, the queen, and the duke went to Paris, which was completely undefended.

On the 29th news came that the English had taken Pontoise. The court removed from Paris, to which the troops of Henry were rapidly approaching. The dauphin solicited another interview with the duke of Burgundy, on mat-

ters of importance to the welfare of the kingdom. The courtiers of the duke urged him not to go, for the dauphin was surrounded by the servants of the duke of Orleans, who had been assassinated in 1407, and by men whose friends and relations had perished in the massacre of the Armagnacs. But the duke resolved to meet his cousin at the place appointed, the bridge of Montereau. At each end of the bridge there were barriers; but there was no barrier in the centre, as was usual in these interviews of princes, who most hated and suspected each other when professions of friendship were most abundant. The dauphin was in a sort of lodge in the centre of the bridge when the duke advanced. They had each taken oaths pledging the safety of the other. The duke of Burgundy had left his attendants a little behind him, and as he bent his knee to the dauphin he was struck down and quickly murdered, the servants of the duke being immediately surrounded by a large body of armed men. The dauphin gave out that the duke offered insult and violence to him; but there can be no doubt that the treacherous murder was premeditated, and the mode of accomplishment resolved upon. The heir of the crown of France was at this time seventeen years of age.

THE PEACE OF TROYES (1420 A.D.)

Philip, the son of the murdered duke of Burgundy, was at Ghent when he received the news of the tragedy at Montereau on the 12th of August. He was married to a daughter of the king of France. "Michelle," he said to his wife, "your brother has murdered my father." No time was wasted in idle complainings. Philip, known in history as the Good, immediately, with the advice of his Flemish subjects, sought an alliance with Henry of England. The people of Paris, adverse as they were to the impending rule of the English, were still more hostile to the Armagnacs, who were desolating the country, with the dauphin at their head. The young duke of Burgundy arranged the terms of a treaty with Henry, which was finally concluded at Troyes, on the 21st of May, 1420. The king of England was to receive the hand of the princess Catherine; to be immediate regent of the kingdom; and to be recognised as successor to the crown on the death of Charles VI.

When the terms of the treaty were announced to the parliament and other authorities of Paris, the highest eulogium was pronounced upon the king of England as a lover of peace and justice, a protector of the poor, a defender of the church. The people were encouraged by these statements to hope for some happy termination of their miseries. The marriage of Henry with the princess of France was celebrated at Troyes on the 2d of June. The next day was one of banqueting. A tournament was proposed as a prolongation of the festivities, but Henry said: "The enemies of the king are in the city of Sens. Let us be ready to-morrow morning to march to its siege, where every knight may show his prowess in doing justice upon the wicked, that the poor people may live." He gave the nobles the most solemn assurances that he would love and honour the king of France, and that the ocean should cease to flow and the sun no more give light before he should forget the duty which a prince owed to his subjects. The bridal month of Henry and his fair queen was passed in besieging Sens, and Montereau, and Villeneuve. When these were taken, Melun was besieged for four months. After its surrender, on the 18th of November, the kings of France and England made a triumphant entry into Paris, and the three estates of the kingdom gave a solemn approval of the Treaty of Troyes.

[1421 A.D.]

At the beginning of 1421 King Henry held a parliament at Rouen. The coinage which was then issued bore the inscription, "*Heres Franciæ.*" To Rouen came many English nobles and knights and did homage to their king for lands granted to them in France. Immediately after, Henry and his queen went to England, and on the 23d of February Catherine was crowned at Westminster. The feasts and pageants that welcomed Henry and his queen were of unusual magnificence; and the chronicler Hall,[b] in his pompous language, expresses the general sentiment of that period: "No doubt England had great cause to rejoice at the coming of such a noble prince and so mighty a conqueror, which in so small space and so brief time had brought under his obeisance the great and puissant realm and dominion of France." But there are other records which show that England herself was beginning to suffer from the operations of "so mighty a conqueror." The first statute of the parliament which the king convened in 1421, referring to the statute of Edward III that sheriffs and escheators should remain only one year in office, says: "Whereas, at the time of the making of the said statute, divers worthy and sufficient persons were in every county of England, to occupy and govern the same offices well towards the king and all his liege people; forasmuch that as well by divers pestilences within the realm of England, as by the wars without the realm, there is not now such sufficiency, it is ordained that the king, by authority of parliament, may make the sheriffs and escheators through the realm, at his will, until the end of four years." Barrington recites this statute to show that the laurels which Henry acquired were obtained at the dearest price, the depopulation of the country. There were other causes than the waste of war to account for the deficiency of "worthy and sufficient persons in every county of England."

In 1418 Henry was confiscating estates in Normandy and bestowing them on his English followers. In 1421 he was receiving homage from English lords for the lands of France. The same temptations which led the Norman barons under the first William to desert the pleasant valleys of the Seine for the ruder abodes of the Severn and the Trent, now sent back their descendants to Normandy to make new acquisitions in the country from which the English had been dispossessed for two centuries. The evil from which England had been saved by the weakness of John was about to be renewed in the strength of Henry. Fortunate was it that the conqueror did not long remain to perpetuate his conquests, and that in the feebleness of his successor and the distractions of a civil war France was again lost.

The Peace of Troyes was approved by the English parliament, and the commons granted a subsidy of a fifteenth, "to continue the war, that the dauphin and his party, who maintained some cities and provinces against the king, being subdued, France might be entirely annexed to the English crown." But even in this season of popular excitement there was a petition complaining of the intolerable burden of the war. In the previous year a petition had been presented to the duke of Gloucester, in a parliament which he had summoned as guardian of England, that he would move the king and queen to return, as speedily as might please them, in relief and comfort of the commons; and they also requested that their petitions might not be sent to the king beyond sea, but determined in England. They dreaded, says Hallam,[a] "that England might become a province of the French crown, which led them to obtain a renewal of the statute of Edward III, declaring the independence of this kingdom."

The king and his queen did not remain long "in relief and comfort of the commons." They were making a progress through the kingdom, and had

arrived at York when news came which speedily called back Henry to France. He had left his brother, the duke of Clarence, as his lieutenant in Normandy. Anjou, which recognised the authority of the dauphin, was invaded by the duke; and at Baugé, on the 22d of March, he was surprised in his work of wasting the country by a great force of Angevins, aided by several thousand Scottish auxiliaries under the earl of Buchan, the second son of the regent of Scotland. The duke was slain, and the greater number of his vanguard were killed or taken prisoners. The English archers, however, came up, and drove the French and Scots from the field.

Soon, however, Scot was to be opposed to Scot in the great contest for dominion. Murdoch, the regent of Scotland, had lent assistance to the dauphin at a time of peace with England, and many of the Scottish nobles disapproved of the measure. The king of Scotland, James I, had been sixteen years a captive in Windsor castle; and here, like that other illustrious prisoner the duke of Orleans, he found in the cultivation of literature a solace for the absence of liberty. In the garden of the keep of Windsor he first saw Jane Beaufort, walking amongst the hawthorn hedges and the juniper branches, and henceforth the cousin of King Henry was, in his mind, "the fairest and the freshest younge flower." So the captive has recorded of his love in his charming poem of *The King's Quair*. Jane Beaufort's widowed mother had married the duke of Clarence, and this circumstance might have been some inducement to the captive king to accept the offer of Henry to accompany him to France, to redeem the great disaster of Baugé. Archibald, earl of Douglas, and other Scottish knights, joined Henry and their young king, and set sail from Dover, with four thousand men-at-arms and twenty-four thousand archers. Queen Catherine was left at Windsor. Henry and his army landed at Calais on the 12th of June.

After several minor successes, King Henry, at the earnest entreaty of the people of Paris, undertook the siege of the city of Meaux, about thirty miles from the capital. The commander of the place, known as the bastard De Vaurus, was a devoted adherent of the count d'Armagnac, who had been butchered by the Parisians; and, in revenge of his death, he massacred every Burgundian that he could encounter in the predatory excursions which he made to the very walls of Paris. He was a public enemy, carrying on a partisan warfare with a ferocity of which even those times of bloodshed furnished few examples. Henry undertook to subdue this brigand. But Meaux was a place of remarkable strength, and it was seven months before it was wholly taken. In this siege Henry lost several of his best captains, amongst whom were the earl of Worcester and Lord Clifford, and his men were swept away by an epidemic sickness. At last the garrison was starved out, and the commander was decapitated. By the surrender of Meaux the English became masters of the greater part of France to the north of the Loire. The queen of Henry had borne him a son, and she came back to France, with her infant, to join her husband in Paris. There was a short season of festivity at the Whitsuntide of 1422, and then the king set out to raise the siege of Caen.

DEATH AND CHARACTER OF HENRY V

He had for some time been labouring under a disease which he bore up against with the same iron will that made him face every danger and difficulty of warfare. At Corbeil he became too ill to proceed; and his brother, the duke of Bedford, took the command of the army, in concert with the duke

[1422 A.D.]

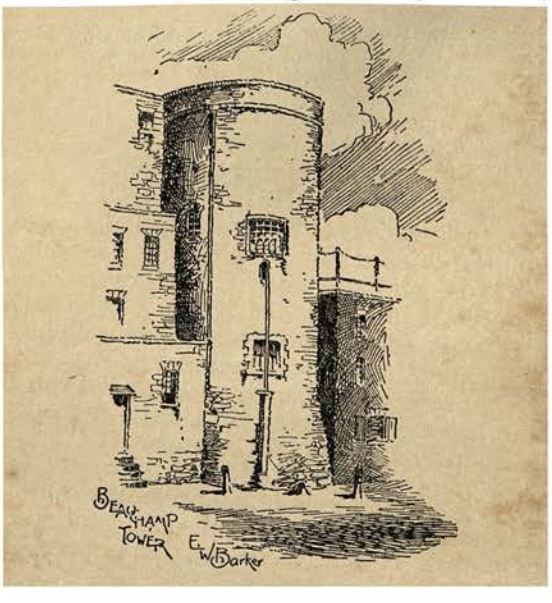
of Burgundy. Henry was carried back on a litter to the Bois de Vincennes. It soon became evident that his malady, whatever it might be, was beyond the medical skill of those days to arrest or cure. The English who surrounded the bed of the dying man saw the same composure which he had always shown on the battle-field. He commended his child to the care of his brother, the duke of Bedford, desiring the earl of Warwick to be his tutor. His brother of Gloucester he wished to be guardian of England. He advised that the regency of France should be offered to the duke of Burgundy, but in the event of his refusal, to the duke of Bedford. Above all, he urged that no peace should be concluded with the dauphin, unless Normandy were ceded in absolute sovereignty to the English crown.

Having delivered his last wishes, he asked the physicians how long he might expect to live. They said the Almighty had power to restore him to health. He repeated the question, requiring a direct answer. The answer was, "Not more than two hours." The ministers of religion then came to his bed and recited the penitential psalms. At the words, "Thou shalt build up the walls of Jerusalem," he said, "If I had finished the war in France, and established peace, I would have gone to Palestine, to redeem the holy city from the Saracens." The last dream of glory was sanctified by the aspirations of religion.

Henry V died on the 31st of August, 1422, in the tenth year of his reign, the thirty-fourth of his age. The devoted attachment to him of the English in France was expressed in funeral solemnities more than usually significant of real sorrow. Upon a car was shown a waxen figure of the king; and in a slow journey of many days a procession of heralds and priests, and knights and esquires in black armour, with all the dead king's household, traversed the country which had witnessed his painful marches—from Paris to Rouen, from Rouen to Abbeville, from Abbeville to Calais. Out of every town came the clergy and joined the cavalcade, and at night the body was placed in the principal church. The French people looked on with wonder, and even with pity, for the untimely fate of the great king; for they had seen the perfect discipline which he had preserved in his army, and how sternly he had repressed and punished the violence and exactions of their own lords. A fleet waited to convey the body and the English mourners to Dover. Slowly London was reached; and the funeral obsequies having been performed at St. Paul's in the presence of the lords and commons of the parliament, all that remained of the warrior and statesman was finally deposited in Westminster Abbey.

It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to form a just estimate of the character of Henry V, in regarding it from the modern point of view. To place before our eyes the social good that might have been accomplished by a prince of such eminent talents, of such strong will, of such firm self-reliance, of such fortitude under the most appalling difficulties, of such equanimity at the height of success, of such zealous though erring sense of religious obligation; to view him in a possible career of honest energy without the lust of conquest, and to blame him for not preferring a real usefulness to a blind ambition—this is to set aside the circumstances which gave a direction to the actions by which we must judge of his character. We can imagine a prince so endowed, despising the superstition of his times, determine to make a corrupted church tolerant, and to bestow liberty of conscience upon all his subjects. Such a conquest of bigotry would have been a wilder and a more dangerous undertaking than the conquest of France. We can imagine him looking beyond all the prejudices of his age, and discovering that a free commercial intercourse between nations is the true foundation of prosperous industry.

Such a theory has not been possible to be realised in England till the very times in which we live, and is even now rejected as impossible by nations far more advanced in understanding what belongs to real civilisation than the England of the fifteenth century. We can imagine him destroying the jealous factions which disturbed his father's doubtful authority, by calling forth the love of the great body of the people, and urging forward the rights of the burgess and the labourer to control the oppressions that still clung to the decaying system of feudality. It was long before the monarchical could extinguish the aristocratic tyranny; and then the rule of the one was, in many respects, a despotism more injurious than the grasping and turbulent power of the many. England had to pass through various stages of misrule before the universal good could be received as the great end of all government. Before Henry V there was opened the magnificent prospect of recovering the hereditary dominions of the Norman kings, which had slipped away from the feeble successors of the greatest of that valiant race; which had been partially won back by the third Edward; and which had again been surrendered to the growing power of France. His negotiations show that his real policy was to recover what had been lost after the Treaty of Bretigny; and that his demand of the French crown would have been soon abandoned had not the distractions of France offered an irresistible temptation to his enthusiastic ambition. For he was an enthusiast. He had an undoubting confidence in the justice of his claim; he had no apprehensions of its impolicy. His bravery, fortitude, and perseverance won the admiration of the English people, as such qualities will always command the applause of a military nation. In England every man was trained to arms, and the brilliant achievements of the great soldier were far more valued than the substantial merits of the just lawgiver. But the career of Henry V was not without its national benefit. From his time there was no false estimate in Europe of the prowess of the English; from his time there was no dream that the proud island might be subjugated. Even in the civil wars of the half century which succeeded Henry, England was unmolested from without. No king of France ever thought to avenge Agincourt by wearing the crown of England in right of conquest.[c]



CHAPTER XV

THE REIGN OF HENRY VI

[1422–1461 A.D.]

HENRY VI can hardly be said ever to have reigned; for his long minority passed into another kind of tutelage, during which the influence of his wife and favourites prepared the way for civil war. Ten years of anarchy culminated in his dethronement, and ten years more of wandering and imprisonment fill the interval between that and his death. The first interest of the first thirty years of his life lies in watching the decay of English power in France; that of the last twenty is to be found in the civil wars that resulted from the misgovernment of the preceding period.—PROTHERO.

THE PROTECTORATE

THE French throne was preserved from ruin by the premature death of Henry V. The task of maintaining the ascendancy which he had gained devolved on an infant successor and a divided ministry; while the dauphin, in the vigour of youth and seconded by the wishes of the people, called the different factions under his banner, and directed their combined efforts against the invaders of their country. We shall see that prince recover in the course of a few years the crown of his ancestors, expel the English from their conquests, and seal a long series of successes with the subjugation of Gascony, the last fragment of the ancient patrimony belonging to the English monarchs in France.

The new king, the son of Henry and Catherine, was hardly nine months old. On the first advice of his father's decease, several spiritual and temporal peers, chiefly members of the old council, assembled at Westminster,

issued commissions in the name of Henry VI to the judges, sheriffs, and other officers, to continue in the exercise of their respective duties, and summoned a parliament to meet in the beginning of November. On the previous day a commission to open, conduct, and dissolve the parliament in the king's name, with the consent of the council, was offered by a meeting of peers to the duke of Gloucester. He objected to the words, "with the consent of the council," that they were prejudicial to his right, that they made him the servant of the council, and that they had never been introduced into similar commissions under his late brother. It was replied that the present king was an infant, and therefore without these words, or others equivalent, no man could act legally and safely. Each lord in his turn gave his opinion, and the duke was fain to submit.

The parliament was opened by him in the usual form. The first care of that assembly was to ratify all the acts of the authority by which it had been convened, as sufficiently justified by the necessity of the case; its second, to supply the defect in the exercise of the royal authority arising from the infancy of the king. The two preceding centuries furnished three instances of minorities—at the accession of Henry III, Edward III, and Richard II. But on none of these occasions had the powers of the executive government been intrusted to a guardian or regent, if we except the first two years of Henry III, when the appointment of such an officer was deemed requisite to oppose the pretensions of a foreign competitor at the head of a powerful army and in possession of the capital.

The duke of Gloucester, however, notwithstanding the decision of the preceding day, preferred a claim to the regency on two grounds: because in the absence of the duke of Bedford he was the nearest of kin to his nephew, and because the late king, when he lay on his death-bed, had appointed him to that charge. The lords (for such matters did not appertain to the cognisance of the commons) having searched the rolls, and consulted the judges, replied that his demand was not founded either on law or precedent, but was contrary to the constitution of the realm and the rights of the three estates; and that the appointment of the late king was of no force, because he could not alter the law of the land without the three estates, nor delegate the authority, which expired with his life, to be exercised by another after his death. To satisfy him, however, as far as was in their power, they would appoint him president of the council, in the absence of his brother the duke of Bedford, not with the title of regent, lieutenant, governor, or tutor (words which might be construed to import a delegation of the sovereign authority), but with that of "protector of the realm and church of England"—an appellation which could serve only to remind him of his duty.[1] Acting on these principles they named the chancellor, treasurer, and keeper of the privy seal, and sixteen members of the council, with the duke of Bedford, and in his absence the duke of Gloucester, for president; and by a deputation notified these nominations to the commons, who gave their assent. Regulations were then enacted for the direction of the council, the duties on wool with the tonnage and poundage were continued for two years, and the parliament was dissolved. England presented no cause of uneasiness, but every eye was most anxiously turned towards France.[e]

[1 Hallam[d] emphasises the importance of this action, as showing the strict adherence to the constitutional principle that a king could not appoint a regent during the minority of his successor, and that only by parliamentary consent could anyone during a king's infancy exercise the royal prerogative. Parliament's control of a regent is an instance of its increasing strength.]

CONTINUATION OF THE WAR

In less than two months after the death of Henry V, Charles VI, king of France, also died. At the funeral solemnities at St. Denis the herald cried aloud, "Long life to Henry, king of France and England, our sovereign lord." France had been for forty-two years under the nominal rule of an incapable king, subject to accesses of insanity which delivered him, powerless, to one or other of the factions that distracted his kingdom. There were now two kings in France—an infant in Paris, with a regent who governed north of the Loire; and the dauphin, alike the object of party hatred and party adulation, who was crowned at Poitiers as Charles VII, and who ruled or influenced most of the provinces south of the Loire. Brittany at first remained neutral in this great quarrel. Burgundy was with the English. When, therefore, some are accustomed to say that Henry V conquered France, they speak with a very loose estimate of the territory that remained unconquered. As we have already said, in thirty years from the death of Henry V all that had been surrendered to his arms or his policy was utterly lost.

To follow through the various fortunes of this war in France would, with some striking exceptions, be only to repeat the monotonous details of sieges and battle-fields—wearisome even when told with a due comprehension of their peculiar aspects. The more important of the early contests between the regent Bedford and Charles VII were the battle of Crevant, in 1423, where the earl of Salisbury signally defeated the earl of Buchan, commanding an allied army of French and Scots; and the battle of Verneuil, where Bedford utterly routed the French army in an engagement which was recorded in the rolls of parliament as "the greatest deed done by Englishmen in our days, save the battle of Agincourt." The duke of Bedford had military talents; and his policy sought to strengthen his faction by powerful alliances. He married the sister of the duke of Burgundy, and he negotiated a marriage between another sister of that duke and the duke of Brittany. But these friendships were soon endangered by the rash passions of the duke of Gloucester, the protector and defender of England. The alliance with Burgundy had given stability to the power of Henry V. The personal ambition of his brother Gloucester weakened this support of the English rule. Jacqueline of Hainault was the sovereign lady of Holland, Zealand, Friesland, and Hainault. She was first married to the eldest son of Charles VI of France, who died whilst dauphin, and she was then wedded to the duke of Brabant, kinsman to the duke of Burgundy. Eloping from her husband, she went to England, and obtaining a divorce from the anti-pope, Benedict XIII, married the duke of Gloucester, who claimed her large territorial possessions, and landed five thousand men at Calais to support his claim. Hainault became the seat of a new war. The dukes of Burgundy and Bedford endeavoured to reconcile the disputants; but Gloucester was obstinate, and bitterly quarrelled with Burgundy. It was agreed that a single combat should decide this new hostility; but Bedford at Paris and the parliament in England saw to what national evils this rupture might lead. Gloucester, in spite of their joint remonstrances, led an army into Holland, and the English in France began to take the side of their rash countryman.

The question was finally settled by the pope declaring the marriage of Gloucester void; and he eventually consoled himself by marrying Eleanor Cobham, a lady of humble rank and spotted reputation. From that time the duke of Burgundy cooled towards the English alliance. Gloucester,

when he returned to England, engaged in a fierce quarrel with his uncle, Henry Beaufort, bishop of Winchester, and chancellor, who was one of the illegitimate brothers of Henry IV.[1] The people of London, in 1422, had seen their king, then two years old, "borne towards his mother's chare, and he shrieked, and cried, and sprang, and would not be carried." In 1424 they had seen him placed before the high altar of St. Paul's, and then seated upon a horse and paraded through the city. In 1425, with a view probably to diminish the influence of the protector by exhibiting the child Henry as a shadow of royalty, he was brought into the house of lords and seated on the throne on his mother's knee. "It was a strange sight," says Speed, the chronicler, "and the first time it was ever seen in England, an infant sitting in his mother's lap, and before it could tell what English meant to exercise the place of sovereign direction in open parliament." The people knew that the power was necessarily in other hands than those of this poor child and his mother, and they saw the natural guardians of the baby king quarrelling for supremacy. On an October night of 1426 Gloucester sent for the mayor of London, and directed him to have the city strictly watched. The next morning Beaufort came from his palace in Southwark, with archers and men-at-arms, and assaulted by shot and missiles the gate of London bridge, which was closed against him. The citizens were supporters of Gloucester; and, says an *English Chronicle*, "all the city of London was moved against the bishop, and would have destroyed him in his inn at Southwark, but the gates of London bridge were so surely kept that no man might pass out, and the Thames was also kept that no man might pass over."

In the dread of civil war the duke of Bedford came over to England, and a parliament was held at Leicester, where the members were ordered to appear without arms. Gloucester exhibited articles of accusation against the bishop, the principal of which were that he wanted to seize the young king's person, and that he sought to kill the protector and to excite a rebellion. A reconciliation was enforced by appointed arbitrators, who decided that Gloucester should be "good lord to the bishop, and have him in affection and love"; and that the bishop should bear to the protector "true and sad love and affection, and be ready to do him such service as pertaineth of honesty to my lord of Winchester, and to his estate, to do." The bishop was humiliated. He resigned the chancellorship and went abroad. But the pope bestowed upon him the red hat; and Cardinal Beaufort henceforth figures in English history—believed by some to have been a conscientious upholder of the church and an encourager of learning, and by others held as an unscrupulous and grasping politician, who "dies and makes no sign" of repentance for his avarice and cruelty.

[1] Beaufort was the second of the sons of John of Gaunt by his third wife Catherine Ruet, Roet, or Rowet, widow of Sir Otes Swynford, generally supposed to have been the sister of Philippa Rowet, who is said to have been the wife of the poet Chaucer. Catherine Rowet [or Swynford as she is more commonly called], who was the daughter of Sir Paine Rowet, a knight of Hainault, had long been the duke's mistress, having been originally brought over to wait upon his first wife Blanche of Lancaster. The children of John of Gaunt and Catherine—three sons and a daughter—were all born before their marriage, which took place in 1397, but were legitimated that year by a patent which is entered on the rolls of parliament. They took the name of Beaufort from the castle of Beaufort in France where they were born, a property that came into the possession of their father by his first wife. The patent of legitimation entitled them and their descendants to hold all honours and estates, such as duchies, principalities, earldoms, etc.; and in some copies of it there is an express reservation of the right of inheriting the crown. Henry VII descended from the eldest of these Beauforts, John, created (1397) earl of Somerset.[c]

RICHARD BEAUCHAMP, EARL OF WARWICK

In accordance with the will of his dying father, the boy Henry, when six years old, was placed under the tutelage of the earl of Warwick. This companion-in-arms of Henry V was fitted to train his son in all knightly qualities, and thus to form a character the very opposite to that of Henry VI. Warwick had fought under Henry IV at Shrewsbury. He had been on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He had travelled in Prussia, Poland, and Russia. He had challenged any three knights of France to joust with him at Guines, and on three successive days he was the victor in each encounter. His appointment as tutor to the king was made under the authority of the council; and he was to instruct his pupil in all things worthy to be known, nurturing him in the love and fear of his Creator and in hatred of all vice. Warwick held this office till the king was sixteen.

The system of education pursued by this chivalrous warrior might not have been the best fitted for a sensitive boy; for the tutor applied to the council for powers, which were granted, to hold the pupil under the strictest discipline, even after he had been crowned king in 1429. He was not to be spoken to, unless in the presence of Warwick and of the four knights appointed to be about his person, "as the king, by the speech of others private, has been stirred by some from his learning, and spoken to of divers matters not behoveful." The council promised that they would firmly assist the earl in chastising the king for his defaults; and, "that for awe thereof he forbear the more to do amiss, and intend the more busily to virtue and to learning," they should come to the king and declare their assent to his chastisement. According to this curious entry in the rolls of parliament, Warwick applied for these articles as his protection against the young Henry's displeasure and indignation, "as the king is grown in years, in stature of his person, and in conceit and knowledge of his high authority." Severe corporal punishment was the accustomed instrument of good education in the fifteenth century. The scourge was recommended even by gentle mothers to be administered to their sons. One writes to beg that her son's tutor may be implored "that he will truly belash him till he will amend"; adding, "I had rather he were fairly buried than lost for default."

No doubt it was in this spirit of love that Warwick chastised the young king. At this age Henry appears not to have wanted the just sense of his own position which failed him in after life. It is difficult now distinctly to understand what were the deficiencies of his intellect. He probably inherited some portion of the malady of his maternal grandfather; but infirmity of purpose and fear of responsibility seem to have marked his character rather than that unsoundness of mind which exhibits itself in habitual delusions and fitful aberrations. His life was one long state of pupilage. All the wonderful energy of his race appears in him to have been extinguished in a calm indifference to good or evil fortune, and in patient submission to stronger wills than his own—to his uncles, to his preceptor, to his wife, to his wife's favourites. How much of the fire of the Plantagenets might have been trodden out of Henry VI by the severities of his early discipline cannot now be estimated. He was born to a most unhappy position; and it is satisfactory to believe that his hard lot was solaced by that religious trust which lightens the burdens of the wretched, whether on a throne or in a dungeon. The earl of Warwick, who, like many other leaders of chivalry, was an enthusiastic believer in the efficacy of vows and pilgrimages, may have inspired his pupil with that strong

feeling of ceremonial devotion which caused him long to be regarded as a saint. To a right direction of that piety we owe the noble foundations of Eton and King's College, Cambridge—worthy monuments which still call upon us to respect the memory of the most meek and most unfortunate of kings.

THE SIEGE OF ORLEANS (1429 A.D.)

The war in France had been conducted without any decided success on either side, after the victory at Verneuil in 1424, till 1427, when the forces of the duke of Bedford sustained a severe defeat and were compelled to raise the siege of Montargis. But the cause of Charles VII was little advanced by this partial good fortune. His adherents were quarrelling amongst themselves. Many of the nobles who had supported him now deserted a prince whose treasurer declared he had only four crowns in his coffer. Nearly all the fortresses on the right bank of the Loire had been surrendered without defence. The people were enduring famine and disease. Charles, whose character was a little improved by adversity, did not lose hope amidst the evils which surrounded him. He was of an easy nature, and in proportion as his great lords were faithless he addressed himself to the affection of the common people. Gradually a personal as well as a national feeling revived the patriotism which had been almost extinguished. Charles placed his chief reliance upon the possession of Orleans. If that city fell, the provinces beyond the Loire would be open to the English, and he would have to find a shelter in the mountains of Auvergne or the more remote Dauphiné.

The English, it was known, were approaching to besiege Orleans. The inhabitants prepared for its defence with unwonted zeal. They received aids of money from other cities, and a tax was voted for the same aid by the three estates assembled at Chinon. The citizens adopted the most effectual means to resist the besiegers. They destroyed their suburbs, with their vines and gardens and houses, that their enemy might have no lodgment; and they erected strong forts, particularly that of the Tournelles, which, defending the bridge, secured the communication of the city with the left bank of the Loire.

On the 12th of September, 1428, the earl of Salisbury pitched his camp to the south of Orleans, and within a week commenced an attack upon the bulwark of the Tournelles. The assault was resisted with more than usual popular enthusiasm. The experienced warriors discharged their arrows and missiles, and the citizens, male and female, showered down stones upon the assailants. But the fort of the Tournelles was finally taken. The inhabitants then raised another bulwark on an isle of the river and cannonaded the English camp. Dunois and La Hire, the bravest of the French chivalry, arrived with reinforcements. The English lost their best commander, Salisbury. He had mounted the ruined tower of the Tournelles to survey the city, when a stone ball struck him, and carried away his eye and a part of his face. He survived eight days. The duke of Suffolk now succeeded to the command, and the siege was pursued with a perseverance as remarkable as the defence. The great extent of Orleans prevented its complete blockade, and supplies were from time to time thrown in for the relief of the besieged. Reinforcements, too, continued to arrive. To meet the necessities of the besieging army, the duke of Bedford had despatched an immense convoy with provisions from Paris. It was determined to cut off this supply. The convoy, under the command of Sir John Fastolf, was attacked by a detachment from the garrison of Orleans, and by a body of French and Scots commanded by the count de Cler-

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mont. Their force of eight thousand men was defeated by fifteen hundred English. This was called the battle of the Herrings, vast quantities of this lenten food forming part of the supplies. It was fought on the 12th of February, 1429. The line of English forts round the city was gradually extending. The lines now more effectually prevented the arrival of food or men. Famine was beginning to threaten more misery than the sword. The resolution which still remained to the unhappy people was that of despair. The fame of their gallant resistance had gone through France; and it was felt, even in districts far removed from the scene of warfare, that the time was approaching when it should be decided whether France should be governed by the English Plantagenets or by its own race of Valois.

The feudal lord of Orleans was in captivity in England, and it was proposed by the people, seeing resistance was unavailing, that their city should be placed in the keeping of the duke of Burgundy till the great contest for the crown of France was decided. Philip of Burgundy was pleased at the proposal, which was communicated to him by ambassadors from Orleans. The duke of Bedford gave no encouragement to the plan, when it was debated between these allied chiefs at Paris. An adviser of Bedford says, "We are not here to champ the morsels for Burgundy to swallow." Bedford rejoins, "No, no, we will not beat the bushes for another to take the birds." Bedford and Burgundy quarrelled about the expected prey, and Burgundy withdrew his troops, and left the English to continue the siege alone.

PART OF PENNILESS PORCH (GATEHOUSE)

(With arms of Bishop Beckington, 1443, from Cathedral Close, Wells)

The fall of the city was rapidly approaching, when some wonder, not unmixed with contempt, was felt by the leaders of the besieging army, upon receiving a letter dictated in far different terms than those which usually proclaimed the challenges of chivalry: "King of England, and you, duke of Bedford, who call yourself regent of the kingdom of France; you, William de la Pole, count of Suffolk; you, John Lord Talbot, and you, Thomas Lord Scales, who call yourselves lieutenants of the said duke of Bedford, do ye right to the King of heaven; render to La Pucelle, who is sent hither by God, the King of heaven, the keys of the good cities you have taken and plundered in France. And you archers, companions in war, gentlemen and others, who are before the city of Orleans, go your ways into your own country, in the name of God. I am sent by the King of heaven to drive you out of all France." The English captains heard the common rumour that from the borders of Champagne a young woman had travelled to the court of Charles, at Chinon, asserting a divine mission, and that her pretensions had been examined before a solemn council of jurists and theologians at Poitiers. The dauphin must indeed be fallen low to depend upon such aid.

In the hamlet of Domrémy, near Vaucouleurs, a pastoral country watered by the Maas, dwelt a petty cultivator named Jacques Darc, with his wife Isabella. They had a daughter, Joan, who was remarkable for her early piety. Joan saw the men of her own village violently disputing as to the merits of the Burgundians and Armagnacs, but mostly agreed in hatred of the English. She had herself looked upon the extreme misery of the people, and she attributed it, not without justice, to the invasion which had given the crown to an English king at Paris, whilst the true heir was in danger and difficulty. Her enthusiastic nature was stimulated by these united impulses of religion and patriotism, and in her solitary meditations she began to see visions and to hear voices. The first voice which she heard only exhorted her to be pious and discreet; but then came a figure with wings, and commanded her to go to the succour of the king, for that she should recover his kingdom. There was an ancient prophecy, known to the country people, that France should be lost by a woman and saved by a woman. The queen Isabella, who had brought in the English, was the one. The people now added to the prophecy that a virgin from the marches of Lorraine should be the other. Before 1429 Joan was entirely persuaded that she had a power given her to restore the kingdom to Charles VII. The voices which Joan heard disclosed to her the practical mode of carrying out her strong idea.

She forwarded a letter, which she dictated, to Charles, and at length received permission to proceed to Chinon, where she arrived after eleven days' travel. In the conviction of her sanctity, learned doctors, prudent counsellors, and bold warriors agreed that the Maid should be confided in. A suit of armour was prepared for her, and at the head of a large force she set out for Orleans, having authority for its command over the best knights of France. At Blois she put on her armour. Marching on the right bank of the Loire, she desired to enter Orleans through the English lines on that side. She was overruled by Dunois, of which she bitterly complained. It was at length decided that boats loaded with supplies should proceed up the river. The day was stormy, and the vessels could make no way. "The wind will change," said the confident girl. It did change, and the supplies and the troops were landed safely about six miles below the city. Meanwhile, the garrison of Orleans made a sortie on the north, which diverted the attention of the besiegers. An hour after sunset Joan rode into Orleans at the eastern gate.

It was the 29th of April when this extraordinary aid, which was firmly believed to be supernatural, arrived to the beleaguered city. In the camp of the English the men would whisper their fears of impending misfortune; for it could not be concealed that a woman, said to be gifted with the spirit of prophecy, was coming to Orleans at the head of a great reinforcement. The shouts that came forth from the populous city on that April night would tell that she was come. The next day a herald from the Maid presented himself at the English camp. The respect paid to the messenger of princes was denied to the messenger of a reputed sorceress, and he was met by a threat to burn him as a heretic. Another herald came to defy Talbot, and to declare, from the commander of the French, that if the messenger of the Maid received any harm it should be visited upon the English prisoners.

These proceedings began to spread alarm amongst the brave yeomen of England, who had fronted so many dangers in the field, but who had a terror of witches and magicians, which was a characteristic of this period. The soldiers of Suffolk and Talbot looked on in terror and amazement, when, on a tower facing the Tournelles, a form appeared in shining armour and bade them depart if they would avoid misery and shame. William Glasdale, the

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commander of the Tournelles, reviled the maiden, and told her to go back to her cows. "Your men will be driven to retreat," she exclaimed, "but you will not live to fly with them." The French waited for succours from other garrisons before they attempted any great operations against the besiegers. Joan was invariably for instant attack, without heeding disparity of numbers or disadvantages of position. Some of the knights were indignant at her assumed authority, but by her resistless force of will she conquered all opposition.

The succours at length were at hand. There was no attempt to bring them into the city under cover of darkness, or while the English were engaged in another quarter. At the head of the French knights and soldiers, followed by the people of the town, Joan rode forth with her banner, between the towers of the besiegers. They looked on with wonder, but there was no resistance. When she returned at night, she threw herself exhausted on a bed. Awakened by a noise, she cried out, "My arms! my horse!" She rushed into the street, mounted with her banner, and rode alone to the spot where she heard the clamour. A rash sortie had been made, and the assailants were driven back. When they saw the white horse and the banner of the Maid, they shouted for joy, and followed her out of the gate into the besiegers' lines. After an engagement of three hours, the English fort was taken and set on fire. It was Joan's first battle. She had fought with the courage and address of the most accomplished knight.

The terror of the English after this sortie from the Burgundy gate became more universal. The next day the Maid and the chiefs crossed the Loire in a boat, and led an attack upon a fortification on the left bank. She was slightly wounded, and passed the night in the field. The great force of the besiegers was on the right bank of the river; and the sire de Gaucourt, the governor of Orleans, was opposed to this leading forth of the garrison, to leave the city defenceless, while the English were attacked on the left bank. But the daring and confident girl had completely won the real leadership of the soldiers and the citizens. She had returned to Orleans, and had told the chiefs that she had much to do on the morrow. Without any concert with the French leaders, she rose early in the morning and went forth with a tumultuous crowd to the Burgundy gate. It was shut against her egress. The governor was compelled to open it, and she rode out, followed by soldiers and a great multitude. Their counsel being thus rejected, the French knights, with their men-at-arms, reluctantly followed. But their prudence was soon laid aside in the din of battle. The river had been crossed by Joan, and she had commenced an assault on the Tournelles, the great fort held to be impregnable. The artillery from its walls thinned the ranks of the assailants, but the wonderful Maid was always ready with her rallying cry. She was the first to mount the rampart by a ladder. An arrow struck her, and she fell into the ditch. She was carried off, and after a few natural tears drew the shaft out of her shoulder and knelt in prayer. The attack had lasted four hours, and nothing had been gained. The retreat was sounded. Joan implored Dunois not to move. "Let our people rest, and eat and drink." Her standard-bearer had remained near the spot whence the Maid was borne away. The lord of Daubon, who was against a retreat, took the standard, and with another descended into the ditch, and, waving the well-known sign of victory, the French rallied round him.

Seeing what was taking place, Joan went forward to claim her standard. The English, who had seen her borne off wounded, felt a new alarm. The French advanced again to the attack of the fort, under their marvellous leader.

From the other bank the people of Orleans were storming the Tournelles, having crossed the broken arches of the bridge by beams placed on the buttresses. The English were now between two assaults. The soldiers were filled with a superstitious awe. The maiden was on the battlement of the second tower of the works, the first having been taken. The soldiers, with Glasdale, their commander, thus surrounded, were retreating into the main defence upon a wooden bridge, when a cannon-ball struck it, and the commander and his men fell into the stream and were drowned. The prophetic words of the Maid, when Glasdale reviled her, were accomplished. There was now no chance of resistance to the impassioned assaults of the French. The English threw down their arms, and were slaughtered, drowned, or taken prisoners, to the number of seven thousand. No aid came from the panic-stricken camp; and the Maid passed over the repaired bridge into the city amidst the shouts of the multitude, whilst every steeple sent forth its peals of gratulating bells, and at every church Te Deum was sung on that night of victory. The next morning, at break of day, the English marched out from their forts and formed in order of battle to the north and west of the city. They stood in an attitude of defiance before the walls. Joan had hastily risen, and was soon at the northern gate. "Attack them not," she said. "If they attack you, defend yourselves." It was Sunday, the 8th of May. An altar was brought to the gate, and the priests chanted a solemn service. The English standards were displayed; the trumpets sounded; but they turned their faces from Orleans. The siege was at an end.

It is not necessary to assign any miraculous powers to Joan of Arc in accounting for her wonderful success. She honestly believed herself inspired by heaven, and she infused into others that belief. An enthusiast herself, she filled a dispirited soldiery and a despairing people with enthusiasm. The great secret of her success was the boldness of her attacks, when military science reposed upon its cautious strategy. In the eyes of the experienced tacticians she risked the safety of the city when she led her excited multitudes to the assault of the Tournelles. In her own self-reliance she would hear of no other counsels but the most daring, and to that contempt of danger she owed her triumphs. In every desperate struggle between individuals and nations boldness is generally the most certain winner. Boldness was the principle which the peasant girl of Domremy maintained to the end of her wonderful career. In eleven days she had stricken terror into an army which had been the terror of France for eleven years. The government of Charles VII would have rested inactive under the triumph of Orleans. She unceasingly urged the dauphin's progress to Rheims, for she held him not as a king till he was crowned in that city, where all the kings of France for three centuries had been consecrated. The way thither was filled with their enemies. They held the keys of the cities between the Loire and the Seine. But the bold counsels at last prevailed, and Joan's standard was again floating at the head of a French army.

On the 11th of June the duke of Alençon and the chiefs who had defended Orleans arrived before Jargeau, which Suffolk occupied. The English earl had come out with his garrison to offer battle. The French had arrived in haste, and they were driven back. But at the command of the Maid they returned to the attack, and Suffolk retired within his walls. The bombardment of the town continued for three days, when, a breach having been made, Joan led the assault. Jargeau fell, and Suffolk was a prisoner. On the 18th of June was fought the battle of Patay. The English fled from the terrible banner that had been first seen at Orleans, and the lords Talbot and Scales were

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made prisoners. The hasty retreat of Fastolf brought upon him the undeserved imputation of cowardice, and when he came to the duke of Bedford, at Corbeil, he was deprived of the riband of the garter. The triumph of the victory of the Herrings did not save the good knight from the disgrace of the flight of Patay.

But Bedford himself, though a man of great ability, believed, or affected to believe, in a miraculous cause for these reverses of the English. A letter was sent by him, at this period, to the council at London, in which, according to rule, he addresses the young king: "All things here prospered for you till the time of the siege of Orleans, undertaken of whose advice God only knows. Since the death of my cousin of Salisbury, whom God absolve, who fell by the hand of God, as it seemeth, your people, who were assembled in great number at this siege, have received a terrible check. This has been caused in part, as we trow, by the confidence our enemies have in a disciple and limb of the devil, called La Pucelle [the Maid], that used false enchantments and sorcery. The which stroke and discomfiture has not only lessened the number of your people here, but also sunk the courage of the remainder in a wonderful manner, and encouraged your enemies to assemble themselves forthwith in great numbers."

THE CORONATION AT RHEIMS, AND BURNING OF JOAN

It was a false policy of the English chiefs to decry Joan as a sorceress. It was the ready mode to spread the greatest terror of her exploits amongst their own adherents. The French, with equal confidence, proclaimed her as the favoured of heaven, who exhibited as much courage as piety. At this juncture the duke of Bedford secured the doubtful co-operation of the duke of Burgundy; and the cardinal Beaufort, who had raised an army in England for a crusade against the heretics of Bohemia, turned over his troops to the regent of France, to war against the Armagnacs, and to make new efforts against the enchantments which had given them power to resist the long triumphant bravery of the English. They took the field with new hopes. Onward went the Maid upon her resolved design that Charles VII should be crowned at Rheims. On the 28th of June, twelve thousand Frenchmen marched out of Gien, to traverse a country whose towns and fortresses were held by English and Burgundians. They reached Troyes, and encamped before the town.

Six days of inactivity were passed, and the French army wanted food; they were without artillery; and it was proposed to retreat to the Loire. Joan was sent for by the king and his council. "Shall I be believed?" she asked. "Whatever you say," replied the king, "we will attend to." "Then, noble dauphin, assault the town, and you shall enter there to-morrow." On the morrow the famous standard was displayed, and the terrified garrison of Troyes surrendered the place. They went on, and took Châlons without resistance. As they approached Rheims the peasants of her native district came out to look upon the wonderful girl, whom they knew as the shepherdess by wise men accounted mad. After some debate within the town, and great apprehensions of failure in the French camp, Joan urged the king on, and the gates of Rheims were opened. On the 17th of July Charles was crowned in its ancient church. There were few nobles present. The Maiden stood with her standard before the altar. The expense of the coronation amounted only to twenty-four Parisian livres. Never was king so inaugurated. All the accustomed pomp was absent; but when the enthusiastic girl kissed the feet of her monarch, her tears were a holier consecration than the mystic oil with which, as the legends

told, Clovis had been there baptised. Charles then went on towards Paris, receiving the submission of many towns on his march.

Joan thought her mission accomplished, and earnestly desired to return to her father and mother, to keep their herds and flocks. Her counsels now became vacillating. Sometimes Charles retreated and sometimes marched forward. Bedford was moving rapidly to bring the French to an engagement. The two armies suddenly met at Senlis, and for three days a battle was vainly expected. Each army then took its own way—Bedford for Normandy, which had been entered by a hostile force under the constable De Richemont; Charles marched on to Paris. On the 12th of September an assault was made at the faubourg St. Honoré. The intrepid Joan, though she had lost confidence in her miraculous voices, displayed her wonted courage. She scaled the walls, but was wounded, and fell into the fosse. Crawling out from the heaps of dead and dying, she again waved her standard. The old confidence in her powers had deserted the French; and when the attack was repulsed, they reproached her that she had said they should sleep that night in Paris. "You would have slept there," she replied, "if you had fought as I fought." Charles retreated to the Loire. The succeeding winter was passed by the king at Bourges. In the spring the army moved to the relief of Compiègne, which was besieged by the duke of Burgundy. Joan got into the town, and the same day headed a sortie. She was taken prisoner, and was carried to the Burgundian quarters. Her wars were over.

For four months Joan was confined in the castle of Beaurevoir, near Cambray. She was a prisoner of war to the Burgundians. She was afterwards conveyed to Arras and to Crotoy, and was finally delivered to the English in their city of Rouen. The University of Paris urged her trial before an ecclesiastical tribunal, and there are letters from that body full of reproach to the English for not delivering up their prisoner to the justice of the church. At length letters patent were issued in the name of Henry VI, in which it was stated that, in accordance with the public opinion, and at the especial request of the bishop of Beauvais and the University of Paris, she was to be given up to the bishop, to be examined and proceeded against under his authority. She was subjected for several months to the most searching interrogatories.

Heresy and schism, meriting the punishment of fire, were declared to be found against her. The University of Paris ratified the articles of accusation. On a public scaffold at Rouen the sentence of condemnation was read to her by the bishop of Beauvais. Her courage deserted her, and she expressed her contrition and submission. Her sentence of burning at the stake was then to be commuted to perpetual imprisonment. She was taken back to prison, but after two days her confidence returned, and she reaffirmed her belief that her voices came from God; and that, not understanding what the abjuration was that she had been called upon to sign, she had signed in the fear of being burned. She was now a relapsed heretic, in the terms of the cruel zeal of the persecuting ecclesiastics, and her fate was no longer a matter of doubt. In the old market-place of Rouen a pile of wood was built up, and round it a scaffold was erected, where prelates and nobles might sit to behold the death of the heroic girl. There sat Cardinal Beaufort and the bishop of Beauvais; and as Joan stood before them, a sermon was preached, setting forth her atrocities; and the preacher concluded with, "Joan, go in peace; the church can no longer protect thee, and delivers thee into secular hands."

She was immediately dragged to the pile; the fatal cap of the Inquisition, with the words *hérétique, relapse, apostate, idolâtre*, was placed on her head; the fire was kindled. Her last word was "Jesus." On the spot where this

deed of infamy was perpetrated stands one of the monuments by which the French of later times have sought to redeem their share of the disgrace of this murder of the 30th of May, 1431. French historians attempt to fix the greater blame upon the English. It is clear that, although the vengeance of those who had been driven from Orleans and vanquished at Patay was the main cause of this tragedy, it would not have been accomplished except through that terrible power which, under the name of religion, had no quality of mercy when a heretic was to be hunted to the death. The bishop of Beauvais and the cardinal of Winchester knew no distinction of nation when they sat on the scaffold at Rouen to do the work of the Holy Inquisition.

THE DREAM OF CONQUEST ENDS

The coronation of Charles VII at Rheims was to be rivalled by the more gorgeous ceremony of crowning Henry VI at Paris. On St. George's day of 1430 the boy who had been crowned at Westminster came, with Beaufort, to Calais. They remained there a month. On the 17th of December Henry made his public entry into Paris, and was crowned at Notre Dame. He returned to England in February, 1431, and rode into London amidst as profuse and laboured pageantry as had welcomed his father from Agincourt. He came under very different auspices. Dressed up with the mantle of royalty and the crown on his head, the boy of ten years of age was to perform the character of king, that the exhibition might strengthen one of the parties in the state that was aiming at supremacy.

Whilst these follies were enacted in England, Harfleur was recaptured by the French. The first trophy of Henry V was for a while lost. The alliance of the duke of Burgundy was fast slipping away. Every year added to the strength of the national party in France. At every conference for peace the demands of Charles VII became enlarged. At the congress of Arras, in 1435, the French would only agree to cede Normandy and Guienne, to be held as fiefs, all other possessions and all claim to the crown being surrendered. The conditions were refused, and the duke of Burgundy abandoned the English alliance. He made a separate treaty with Charles VII, swearing that he would forget his father's death and be at perpetual peace with France. Monstrelet[l] says that the young king Henry wept at the news of this peace of 1435. The people of England manifested their indignation by seeking out the subjects of the duke of Burgundy, Flemings and others, to maltreat and murder them. The duke of Bedford, who had steadily upheld the will of his heroic brother, died at this critical period.

There was no union in the English councils. The duke of Gloucester would have called up the old heart of England to redeem the losses and disgraces of the six years that were passed. The cardinal of Winchester, perhaps more wisely, advocated peace. In the quarrels between these rival leaders in the council all opportunity for a successful struggle passed away. Paris was retaken by Charles in 1436, and the English were expelled. "When they should pass upon their journey," says Fabyan,[i] "they were derided and scorned of the French nation out of all measure." Successes in Normandy, under the duke of York and Talbot, only prolonged the final issue; and when the duke of Burgundy's possessions were devastated by Talbot in 1437, when Picardy was ravaged in 1440 and Harfleur was once again captured by the English, when York was superseded as regent by Warwick and Warwick again replaced by York, each making new attempts to recover the lost ascendancy—it was

still manifest to the French that the time was approaching when the spirit of nationality would successfully maintain itself against the pretensions of alien rulers.

After twenty-five years' captivity the duke of Orleans was released from his prison in the Tower of London. There is a private contemporary record, *The Paston Letters*,[k] which shows the interest that the English took in the passing events connected with France: "Tidings: the duke of Orleans hath made his oath upon the sacrament, and used it, never for to bear arms against England, in the presence of the king and all the lords except my lord of Gloucester; and in proof that my said lord of Gloucester agreed never to his deliverance, when the mass began he took his barge. God give grace the said lord of Orleans be true, for this same week shall he towards France."

The war is continued a few years longer, and then a truce. England is anxious about the terms of pacification. Agnes Paston writes to her son on the 14th of February, 1445: "I pray you to send me tidings from beyond sea, for here they are afraid to tell such as be reported." The people were reluctant to believe, and thought it dangerous to say that their weak young king was to marry a daughter of the duke of Anjou, with the approbation of the French king, whose consent would be bought by the surrender of all that remained of the lands which English treasure and blood had won in that war of twenty years. Their fears were accomplished. Henry was married to Margaret of Anjou in 1445, and one of the conditions of the marriage and the consequent truce was the surrender of Anjou and Maine. Normandy was soon conquered, when Maine, the key to its possession, was gone. Gascony yielded to the French in 1451; and after the last of the great English captains, the dreaded Talbot, fell at Castillon in 1458, Bordeaux was taken. The dream of conquest,[1] which had lasted for more than a century, was at an end.[b]

The conclusion of the Hundred Years' War coincides with the period when the two parties that divided England were just about to appeal to arms. The civil war was in great measure the result of defeats abroad, as these defeats themselves were in part the consequence of discord at home. Quarrels between the chief members of the reigning house were the origin of its weakness; financial embarrassment, a divided foreign policy, and a feeble administration brought disgrace on the king and his advisers; family feuds and a long tale of mutual injuries added bitterness to political differences. Eventually an outburst of popular discontent kindled the train so long prepared, and the champion of order and good government began a struggle in which the original objects were soon lost sight of, and which ended only with the death of the king, whose innocent imbecility had caused the disorder.[g]

SOCIETY DURING THE WAR OF THE ROSES

In the progress of our narrative we have arrived at one of the most remarkable epochs of England's eventful history. We have arrived at that period when we may turn aside from that great contest between England and France—"two so invincible nations," says Hall,[f] "which never would yield or bow the one to the other, neither yet once hear of abstinence of fighting or refusing from war,

[1 "Had the Plantagenets, as at one time seemed likely, succeeded in uniting all France under their government, it is probable that England would never have had an independent existence. Her princes, her lords, her prelates would have been men differing in race and language from the artisans and tillers of the earth. The revenues of her great proprietors would have been spent in festivities and diversions on the banks of the Seine. The noble language of Milton and

so much were their hearts hardened, and so princely were their stomachs." In this war, and in previous French wars, Comines[m] tells us that the English "carried over a considerable booty into England, not only in plunder which they had taken in the several towns, but in the richness and quality of their prisoners, who paid them great ransoms for their liberty."

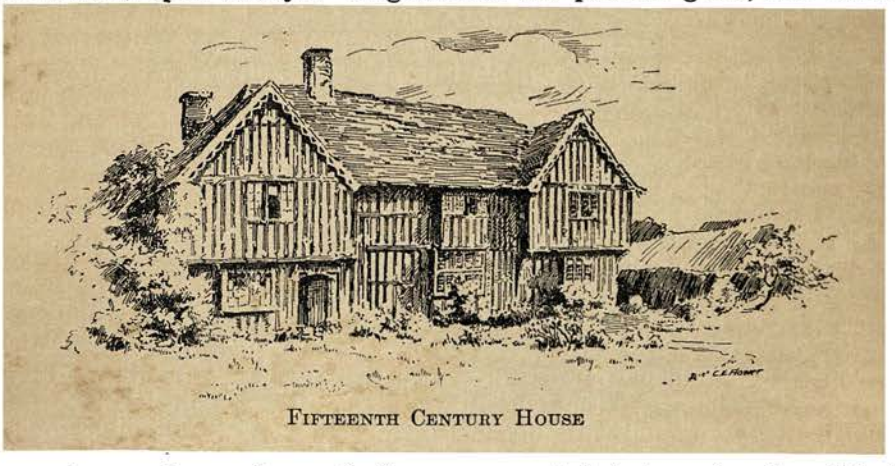
A different war was at hand—a war in which the English lords would fight at intervals for thirty-five years upon their native soil, and only end this work of mutual destruction when one half of the old nobility of England was swept away. During these wars of York and Lancaster, of which the seeds were sown in the distracted councils of the minority of Henry VI, we have many scattered but authentic materials for viewing the social condition of the country. The first division of this extraordinary period opens with the insurrections of 1450, and then proceeds in showing the duke of York taking up arms in 1452, and his son Edward seated on the throne in 1461. The second embraces the perilous fortunes of Henry and his intrepid wife, and the overthrow of the Lancastrian party after that gleam of triumph, which was destroyed by the fatal battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury in 1471. Edward sits on the throne for thirteen years longer, in comparative tranquillity; then two more years of mysterious murder and fierce war; and then a dynasty with which the feudal system has practically come to an end. This is one great epic which requires to be told without any material interruption to the relation of events, of which the links are welded in one continuous chain.

During this troubled time, when we might naturally expect that the whole framework of society would be thrown into disorder, we find the internal administration of England proceeding with the same regularity as if the struggle for supremacy were raging on the banks of the Seine instead of the banks of the Thames. The uniform course of justice is uninterrupted. Men are litigating for disputed rights, as if there were no general peril of property. They are electing knights of the shire and burgesses, under aristocratical or popular influences, as if the real arbitrament of these contentions was to be in the parliament-house and not in the battle-field. They are buying and selling, growing and exporting, as if the producers looked on with indifference whilst the Warwicks and Somersets were slaying or being slain. They wear richer apparel, and strive more for outward distinctions, and build better houses than when their fathers were fighting in France; and they are really prospering in an increase of material wealth, though they greatly lack the instrument of exchange, for the want of money is grievously felt from the peer to the huckster. They pursue their accustomed diversions; they hunt and they hawk; they gamble in public gardens; they gape at the players of interludes; they go on pilgrimage to Canterbury, and Walsingham, and Santiago: they take life easily, as if no danger were around them, when truly they might be in trouble for shouting for the White Rose on one day and for the Red on the next. Their marriages go forward, with the keenest avidity amongst the gentry and the burgesses to make the best bargains for their sons and daughters; and whilst we know how many great houses were rendered desolate by these troubles, we have no satisfactory evidence that during their existence population had decreased.

These appearances on the surface of things involve many important points of national character and social progress. During the period in and near the

Burke would have remained a rustic dialect without a literature, a fixed grammar, or a fixed orthography, and would have been contemptuously abandoned to the use of boors. No man of English extraction would have risen to eminence, except by becoming, in speech and habits, a Frenchman."—MACAULAY.q]

stormy era which commenced with the beginning of the second half of the fifteenth century, and lasted till the quarrels of York and Lancaster came to an end upon Bosworth Field, the condition of society appears to have undergone very slight change; for in whatever regarded the civil administration of the country there was no revolutionary action connected with the sudden changes in the supreme power. It was of this period that Comines,[m] one of the most accomplished statesmen of his age, thus wrote: "In my opinion, of all the countries in Europe where I was ever acquainted the government is nowhere so well managed, the people nowhere less obnoxious to violence and oppression, nor their houses less liable to the desolations of war than in England, for there the calamities fall only upon their authors." In another part of the same chapter he says: "England has this peculiar grace, that neither



FIFTEENTH CENTURY HOUSE

the country, nor the people, nor the houses are wasted, destroyed, or demolished; but the calamities and misfortunes of the war fall only upon the soldiers, and especially the nobility." [Knight furthermore alludes to an actual increase of population during this period.]

But we might still hesitate to believe that the government was well administered, and the people little disturbed by violence, if we were to regard the wars of the Roses as one continued series of exterminating slaughters. Comines,[m] still speaking of these wars, says: "In England, when any disputes arise and proceed to a war, the controversy is generally decided in eight or ten days, and one party or other gains the victory." After the first battle, that of St. Albans, in 1455, there was outward peace for four years. York was in arms in 1459, gained the battle of Northampton in 1460, and was killed on the last day of that year. Within three months his son Edward was on the throne, and had gained the decisive victory of Towton. With the exception of the Lancastrian rising of 1464, the kingdom was at peace till 1470. The attempt then to restore Henry VI was defeated in the fighting of two months. Warwick landed on the 13th of September; Edward fled on the 3rd of October; on the 14th of March, 1471, he was again in England; and after the great battle of Barnet, that of Tewkesbury decided the contest on the 4th of May. The remaining thirteen years of Edward saw no civil warfare. The landing of Richmond and the fall of Richard III proved the affair of a fortnight. The actual warfare in England, from 1455 to 1485, included an aggregate space of time of something less than two years.[b]

DISSENSIONS AT HOME

It had long been apparent that no increase of years would bring Henry VI the spirit of a man or the capability of managing his own affairs. Gentle, timid, submissive, and superstitious, he would have made a tolerably good monk, but he had not one of the qualities which constitute a good king. Parliament, which settled the regency, and apportioned and nicely limited the power and authority of its members, gave no authority whatever to the queen-mother, Catherine of France, the youthful widow of Henry V. This lady appears to have had little ambition, as three or four years after the death of the hero of Agincourt she married Owen Tudor, an obscure gentleman of Wales, who, however, boasted a most ancient and even a royal descent; but what, perhaps, had more influence over Catherine's choice was the circumstance of his being one of the handsomest men in England, besides being "garnished with many godly gifts." In her affection for her promising family by this second marriage, from which sprung the royal line of Tudor, she may have somewhat neglected the care of the sickly and unpromising Henry. But all her cares ceased in 1437, and she had been buried seven years in Westminster abbey, by the side of her first husband,[1] when Henry married.

As soon as William de la Pole, earl of Suffolk, had returned to England with Margaret of Anjou, the bride whom he had chosen for the king, he was elevated to the rank of a marquis, and from that moment he and the queen began to monopolise and divide between them the whole authority of government. They were constantly together, and people said that Suffolk looked more like her husband and king of England than the unfortunate Henry. There was a strong popular prejudice against French queens of any kind, nor did Margaret's conduct at all tend to remove it. She applied doctrines of government which she had learned in France to a country wholly different, and incensed the people by her arrogant, despotic conduct.

The friends and admirers of the duke of Gloucester, among whom the citizens of London were very conspicuous, said everywhere that he would have taken better measures for the preservation of the English conquests; but the duke, either from fear of the prevalent faction at court, or from some other motive, gave his approval in a very marked manner in parliament to all the negotiations concluded by Suffolk. It is quite clear, however, that there was no sincerity in these outward demonstrations, and that "the good duke Humphrey," as he was called by the people, would, on account of his great popularity, be a formidable obstacle in the way of the queen and her favourite. Besides, the passionate and vindictive Margaret was not likely to forget that Gloucester had at first strongly opposed the

[1] By an *ex post facto* law, passed in the sixth year of Henry VI, though not now found on the rolls of parliament, having apparently been torn out, such marriages as those of Catherine with Owen Tudor were declared presumptuous, derogatory to the royal dignity, and illegal, without the express consent of the sovereign. After Catherine's death Tudor was apprehended and put in ward, but he was allowed to escape from the Tower. He was afterwards beheaded for his adherence to Henry VI. Jacquetta of Luxemburg, the widow of the great duke of Bedford, followed Catherine's example, and married, to the great annoyance of the English court, Sir Richard Woodville, who was only a knight. She and her husband, however, after some persecution and payment of a fine of £1,000, were allowed to live in peace. Catherine, besides a daughter, had three sons by Owen Tudor. During the reign of their half-brother Henry VI, Edmund, the eldest, was created earl of Richmond; and Jasper, the second, was made earl of Pembroke. The first of these, by his marriage with the only daughter of John, duke of Somerset, had Henry, who succeeded to the earldom of Richmond, and who afterwards ascended the throne as Henry VII.

measures which made her a queen and gave to her father a respectable existence.

In 1441, after an altercation with the cardinal, in which the duke was defeated and humiliated,[1] a strange prosecution was got up against his wife the duchess, Eleanor Cobham, who had the misfortune of being Gloucester's mistress before she became his wife, and could never wholly efface the unfavourable impression made by this circumstance. She is represented as an avaricious, grasping, ambitious, and dissolute woman; but her enemies drew this portrait, and whatever she might be she was dear to the duke, although he was not the most faithful of husbands.

The duke was much devoted to all the learning then in vogue, and exceedingly fond of the society of learned men. Among other doctors and clerks whom he entertained was one Roger Bolingbroke, whom he kept constantly in his house as chaplain. This Bolingbroke was much given to the sciences, especially to astronomy, and astronomy in those days was generally made to include astrology. Gloucester's wife, aware that Henry was sickly and that her husband stood next in succession, was probably anxious to know whether the stars would tell when the king would die, and she had frequent consultations with the chaplain and others. On a sudden, soon after her husband's last violent quarrel with Cardinal Beaufort,[2] she was accused of treason, "for that she, by sorcery and enchantment, intended to destroy the king, to the intent to advance and to promote her husband to the crown." The duchess and Bolingbroke were arrested, together with Southwell, priest and canon of St. Stephen's, Westminster; John Hum, priest; and Margery Jourdayn, commonly called the Witch of Eye. The duchess was examined in St. Stephen's chapel before the archbishop of Canterbury: she was condemned to do public penance in three places within the city of London, and afterwards to pass her life a prisoner in the Isle of Man, under charge of Sir John Stanley.

QUEEN MARGARET
(1430–1482)

Roger Bolingbroke, the learned astronomer, who died protesting his innocence of all evil intentions, was drawn and quartered at Tyburn; Margery Jourdayn was burned in Smithfield; Southwell died in prison before the time of execution; and John Hum received the royal pardon. The worst thing proved against the duchess was that she had sought for love-philters to secure the constancy of her husband. The worst thing attempted to be proved against her was that she kept by her a wax figure, made by the "cunning necromancers," and endowed with this remarkable quality, that, in pro-

[1] The subject of the quarrel was the liberation (upon ransom) of the duke of Orleans and other prisoners taken at Agincourt. Gloucester opposed their liberation.

[[2] In the common purpose of the encomiasts of the church in its most corrupted state, it is sought to free Beaufort from the imputation of being the moving cause of these hateful proceedings.[b] "Some writers," says Lingard,[c] "have attributed the prosecution of Dame Eleanor to Beaufort's enmity to her husband. But their assertion stands on the slightest foundation; a mere conjecture of Fox that it might be so, because the Witch (of Eye) lived, according to Fabyan,[d] in the neighbourhood of Winchester, of which Beaufort was bishop."]

[1447 A.D.]

portion as it was sweated and melted before a fire, it would, by magical sympathy, cause the flesh and substance of the king to wither and melt away, and his marrow to be dried up in his bones. "The duke of Gloucester," says the chronicler, Hall,[f] "bore these things patiently and said little." But his enemies were now preparing for him the safe silence of the grave.

Death of Gloucester (1447 A.D.)

A parliament was summoned to meet in February, 1447, not in the usual place at Westminster, because the Londoners were devoted to the erring but generous-hearted victim, but at Bury St. Edmunds, in Suffolk, where the favourite was in the midst of his dependents. Orders were given to the knights of the shire to come armed, and the men of Suffolk were collected and crowded in the town and neighbourhood. The king was conveyed to the town, and, as if his sacred person was in danger, a numerous guard was placed round the house he occupied. Gloucester, who was at his strong castle of Devizes, went to attend this parliament, and fell unsuspectingly into the snare.

On the 11th of February, the day after the opening of the session, he was arrested on a charge of high treason, and on the 28th day of the same month he was found dead in his bed. The whole nation believed that the duke was foully murdered, and, with a single but striking exception,[1] all the writers living at or near the time hint, more or less openly, that this was the case. The body of the duke was shown to the people at Bury St. Edmunds, and there were no marks of violence upon it; but all men remembered that the bodies of Edward II, of Richard II, and of the other great duke of Gloucester, who had been taken off at Calais during the reign of Richard II, had been exposed to view in the same manner, and bore no signs of the murderous hands of their enemies. Suffolk's party wished it to be believed that he had died of apoplexy. Some said he had died of a broken heart; but, even in the latter case, Suffolk and the queen were his murderers. Humphrey, however, was not a man likely to die of grief and despair, for he knew his great popularity, which in all probability must have assured him that the parliament, however composed, would not venture to proceed to extremities against him.

Hall *f* has a reflection upon the event which exhibits more of the character of philosophical history than belongs to the old annalists: "There is an old said saw that a man intending to avoid the smoke falleth into the fire: so here the queen, minding to preserve her husband in honour and herself in authority, procured and consented to the death of this noble man, whose death only brought to pass that thing which she would most fain have eschewed, and took from her that jewel which she most desired: for if this duke had lived, the duke of York durst not have made title to the crown; if this duke had lived, the nobles had not conspired against the king, nor yet the commons had not rebelled; if this duke had lived, the house of Lancaster had not been defaced and destroyed—which things happened all contrary by the destruction of this good man."

What followed was a miserable show designed to furnish a plausible justification of his arrest. Five of his retainers were seized, and accused of plotting to release the duchess of Gloucester from her confinement, to come to the par-

[1] This is Whethamstede,*p* who was abbot of St. Albans at the time, a warm friend of Gloucester, and a declared enemy of the Suffolk party, whom he calls "dogs, scorpions, and impious noisers." He asserts that the duke died of grief and sickness. It appears that the abbot could have no motive for concealing the truth if he knew it.

liament in arms, to murder the king, and proclaim the duke their master in his stead. They were convicted and condemned to die the horrible death of traitors; but when they were only half hanged they were cut down, and, before the executioner could proceed in the bloody task of cutting up their bodies, Suffolk produced the royal pardon, and the men were easily restored to animation.

As if he had not already created odium enough, the marquis of Suffolk seized all the estates of the deceased duke, and, after keeping what best suited him, divided nearly all the remainder among his own family and most devoted partisans. The good duke Humphrey left no legitimate children, and, on account of her conviction, Dame Eleanor could not claim any part of his property. The duke's friends in parliament boldly asserted his perfect innocence of treason, and laboured, session after session, to clear his memory from the imputation of his enemies. His old rival, his uncle Cardinal Beaufort, did not long survive him. He had for some time withdrawn from political affairs to his see of Winchester, where, however, in spite of his age and infirmities, he was still cherishing projects of ecclesiastical ambition, and dreaming of the triple crown of Rome which had so long eluded his grasp, but which he fancied was at last within his reach. He died in his palace of Walvesey on the 11th day of April,[1] and bequeathed the mass of his property to charitable purposes.

THE FALL OF SUFFOLK (1450 A.D.)

The tables had been turned: the English began, under Henry V, to make their conquest of France when that country was cursed with a mad king, an intriguing and vindictive queen, and a factious nobility; and they finished losing all they gained, and a great deal more, when the same curses fell upon their own country. But the shame of those losses was not to be borne patiently by a high-spirited people, and before the final closing of the account of defeat and expulsion they took a terrible vengeance on the duke of Suffolk—for such was the title which this minister, rising as his country sank, had now taken to himself.

Bitter complaints had been repeatedly made in parliament by a spirited minority, and as misfortunes thickened this minority became a majority, whose indignation was overwhelming. Towards the end of 1449, while the public mind was exasperated by the recent loss of Rouen, Suffolk was attacked in both houses. He had a short breathing-time during the Christmas recess,[2] but the popular clamour rose louder and louder; and when parliament met, early in January, 1450, he complained of the accusations made against him, defended his loyalty and patriotism, and challenged his accusers to the proof.

[1 His death-bed scene has been depicted by Shakespeare with a terrible power, and has left an impression that it is almost impossible to remove, although its historical accuracy may be well doubted:

> Lord Cardinal, if thou thinkest on heaven's bliss,
> Hold up thy hand; make signal of thy hope:
> He dies and makes no sign.
> HENRY VI, Part II.

The chronicler Hall,*f* on the authority of the cardinal's chaplain, sets forth his dying speech as follows: "Why should I die having so much riches? If the whole realm would save my life, I am able by policy to get it, or by riches to buy it. Fie, will not death be hired, nor will money do nothing?"]

[2] During this interval the bishop of Chichester, a friend of Suffolk and keeper of the privy seal, was massacred by the people of Portsmouth for the part he had taken in the negotiations about Maine and Anjou.

[1450 A.D.]

This challenge was readily accepted. Four days later, the commons requested the lords to commit him to the Tower. The lords replied that they could not commit a peer without some specific charge. The commons took only two days to get up a direct charge, and when they produced it, it was neither honest nor ingenious. It simply charged the duke with having furnished the castle of Wallingford with provisions and military stores, with the object of assisting the king of France, who, they asserted, was preparing to invade England. The lords, however, without hesitation, ordered the arrest of the obnoxious minister, and he was seized and conveyed to the Tower. The bill of impeachment, which the commons prepared in ten days, contained several additional charges. For example, they charged Suffolk with the design of destroying both Henry and Margaret and placing the crown on the head of his own son; and they said that he had contracted engagements with the French, in the view of obtaining their assistance for these ends. To the charges of liberating the duke of Orleans and of ceding Maine and Anjou he was certainly amenable as a minister, and these charges were now preferred against him. But the commons were still wavering and uncertain as to their proofs; and on the 7th of March, a month after laying their first impeachment of eight articles, they presented a new impeachment of a very different kind, which contained sixteen articles, some of which seem probable enough, but none of them amounted to absolute treason.

On the 13th of March Suffolk was brought to the bar of the lords, and falling on his knees before the king, he vowed that he was innocent of any treason. In pleading, he kept to the absurd impeachment in eight articles, never alluding to the charges of waste of money, improvidence, and corruption, nor indeed to any other of the sixteen charges contained in the second bill of impeachment. As to the article relating to his project to secure the crown for his own son, he maintained that it was absurd, and the project impossible. He could not deny the cession of Maine and Anjou; but he urged that he was not alone in that guilt (if guilt it were), for the other lords of the council had authorised that measure, and the peers in parliament had afterwards sanctioned it. The whole proceeding ended, as it began, in irregularity.

On the 17th of March Suffolk was again called up to the lords, the king being present. The chancellor[1] observed to the duke that he had not claimed the privilege of a peer, and asked him whether he had more to say in defence of his conduct. Suffolk said that he thought he had said enough to establish his innocence, and he threw himself upon the will of the king, his master. The scene had been arranged beforehand; the chancellor instantly rejoined, saying that, as the duke did not put himself upon his peerage for trial, the king would not declare him either innocent or guilty; but with respect to the second impeachment (to which Suffolk had given no answer), the king, not as a judge taking counsel of the lords, but as one to whose authority the prisoner had submitted of his own free will, commanded him to quit England before the 1st of May, and to remain in banishment for the space of five years.

If parliament had entered into this compromise, and were satisfied with it, it was far otherwise with the people of London. These were furious that the traitor, the cause of all the disgrace abroad, as they considered him, should be allowed to escape so easily, and on the day of his enlargement upwards of two thousand persons collected to take his life. Suffolk, however, evaded

[1] This was the archbishop of York. Suffolk's chancellor, the archbishop of Canterbury, resigned the seals at the first blush of the prosecution. According to some accounts, the present scene passed in the king's apartment, to which all the lords, spiritual and temporal, were summoned.

the rage of this mob, and went to his estates, where he summoned his relatives, friends, and dependents. In their presence he swore upon the host that he was a wronged and innocent man, and then he went to Ipswich and embarked for the Continent.

On the 2nd of May, as they were sailing between Dover and Calais, the two small vessels which carried the exile and his retinue were brought-to by the *Nicholas of the Tower*, a great ship of war. The duke was ordered on board the *Nicholas*, the captain of which said to him, as he stepped upon the deck, "Welcome, traitor!" He was kept on board two days, during which the ship stood off and on, probably communicating with some great movers in the business on shore, and the duke employed himself with his confessor. On the third day a cock-boat came alongside, and in the boat were a block, an axe, and an executioner. Suffolk was handed over to the latter, who cut off his head. A general cry had been raised that Suffolk still retained the confidence of Margaret, and that it was insupportable to see the "queen's darling" escape with a certainty of being soon recalled to power and to vengeance; but who were the great directors of his assassination was never clearly proved. No investigation took place; the people rejoiced at the death, and their minds were soon excited by other events which were the faint prelude to the wars of the Roses.

JACK CADE'S REBELLION (1450 A.D.)

John Cade was a native of Ireland, who had passed some time in France as a soldier of the English, or, according to other authorities, as an outlaw. It appears, however, that he had returned to his own country, and that he came from Ireland, then governed by the duke of York, into England, at the moment when the excitement against the government was at the highest. Insurrections had broken out in several parts of the kingdom before Suffolk's fall, and Cade put himself at the head of a popular movement immediately after that event. He assumed the noble name of Mortimer, and claimed a descent which made him a relation (though illegitimately) of the duke of York.

None but very questionable evidence was ever brought to show that this prince had employed him, yet it is certain that Cade, or rather the peculiar circumstances of the times, without which Cade would have been nothing, played the game of the duke, and encouraged the hopes which York had long entertained of grasping the royal power. The men of Kent[1] had long been noted for their determined spirit; they were the boldest and least vicious of the insurgents who, under Wat Tyler, nearly overturned a former weak government; they were probably better informed than the people of the inland counties of what was passing in France; and they were now more violent in their complaints than the rest of the nation. It was said that the queen held them guilty of the recent murder of her favourite, whose headless body lay for some time exposed on the beach near Dover, and that she had threatened to take a sanguinary vengeance.

Cade threw himself among these men, who selected him to be their captain. He led them towards the capital; and about the middle of June a great multitude, estimated at fifteen or twenty thousand, encamped at Blackheath,

[1] Thierry[h] ascribes the readiness of the men of Kent to take the lead in popular insurrections to their having preserved some remembrance of their fathers having made terms with William the Conqueror. A much more likely cause lay in the law of gavelkind prevailing in that country. This "incensate custome of gavelkind," as it is called in the *Glory of Generosity*, "tendeth to the destruction of auncient and gentle houses," and hence also to the multiplication of small democratic proprietors.

[1450 A.D.]

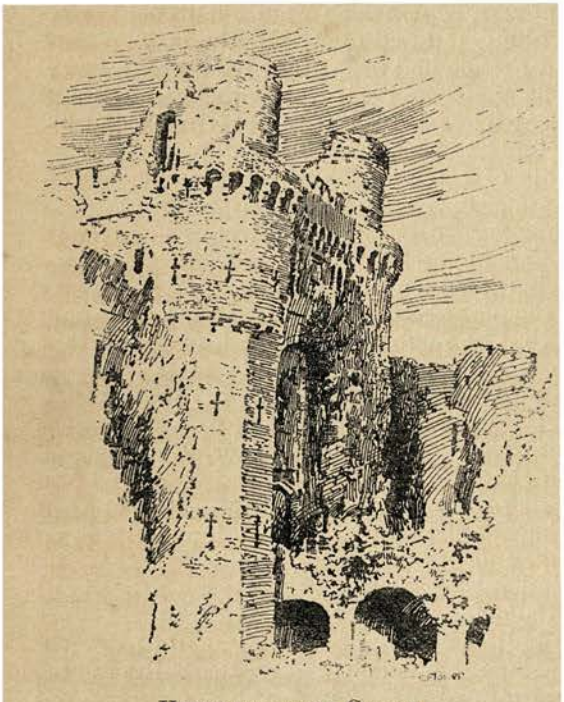
from which point Cade kept up a correspondence with the Londoners. The court sent to demand why the good men of Kent had quitted their homes. Cade gave their reasons in a paper entitled *The complaint of the commons of Kent.* After alluding to the report that Kent was to be destroyed by a royal power, and made a hunting forest, "for the death of the duke of Suffolk, of which the commons of Kent were never guilty," Cade, or the pens that wrote for him, went on to complain that justice and prosperity had been put out of the land by misgovernment; that the king was stirred to live only on the substance of the commons, while other men fattened on the lands and revenues of the crown; that the people of the realm were not paid for stuff and purveyance forcibly taken for the king's use; that the princes of the royal blood were excluded from the court and government, which were filled exclusively by mean and corrupt persons, who plundered and oppressed the people; that it was noised that the king's lands in France had been alienated and put away from the crown, and the lords and people there destroyed with untrue means of treason; that the commons of Kent had been especially overtaxed and ill-treated; that their sheriffs and collectors had been guilty of infamous extortion; and that the free election of knights of the shire had been hindered. The court pretended to be preparing a proper answer to this startling list of grievances, but it employed the time thus gained in collecting troops in London.

In this interval Cade sent in another paper, headed *The requests by the captain of the great assembly in Kent.* This document, though conceived in respectful language, went more directly to the point. It required that the king should resume the grants of the crown, so that he might reign like a king royal; that he should instantly dismiss all the false progeny and affinity of the duke of Suffolk, and take about his noble person the true lords of his royal blood, namely the high and mighty prince the duke of York, long exiled from the king's presence, and the mighty princes the dukes of Exeter, Buckingham, and Norfolk; that he should punish the false traitors who had contrived and imagined the death of that excellent prince the duke of Gloucester, of their holy father the cardinal,[1] and others, and who had promoted and caused the loss of Anjou, Maine, Normandy, and other parts of France.

The court had now levied a considerable army, and this force was sent out to give the rebels their answer. Cade fell back from Blackheath to Sevenoaks, where, in a good position, he halted, and waited the attack of a detachment of the royal army. This detachment was defeated on the 24th of June, and the commander, Sir Humphrey Stafford, was slain. The soldiers had not fought with good will at Sevenoaks; and when their main body, still at Blackheath, got intelligence of that affair, they began to say that they liked not to fight against their own countrymen, who only called for a reasonable redress of grievances. The court now found that concession was expedient: and they sent Lord Saye, a very obnoxious minister, and some other individuals who had been closely connected with the duke of Suffolk, to the Tower, which Lord Scales undertook to maintain for the king. The army was disbanded, and the king was conveyed for safety to the strong castle of Kenilworth. While this was doing, Cade reappeared at Blackheath, and by the end of June he had made himself master of all the right bank of the Thames, from Lambeth and Southwark to Greenwich. From Southwark he sent to demand entrance into the city of London; and this, after a debate in the common council, was freely granted to him by the lord-mayor.

[1] This murder of old Beaufort was the most absurd statement in these documents. Surely it was natural enough for a man to die at the age of eighty; and the cardinal died almost in public.

On the 3rd of July Cade led his followers into the heart of the capital. He seemed anxious to preserve the strictest discipline; he issued proclamations forbidding plunder, and in the evening he led his host back to the borough. The next day he returned in the same good order; but he forced the mayor and judges to sit in Guildhall and pass judgment upon Lord Saye, of whose person he had, by some means, obtained possession. Saye demanded a trial by his peers, but Cade's men hurried him to the standard at Cheapside and cut off his head. Soon after they did the same by Saye's son-in-law, Cromer, the sheriff of Kent.[1] When this was over, they retired quietly to the borough for the night. In the course of the following day a few houses were pillaged. The citizens now took counsel with Lord Scales, who had one thousand soldiers in the Tower; and it was resolved that they should prevent Cade from entering the city on the morrow. The insurgents got news of this intention in the night, and instantly made an attack on the bridge. The citizens resolutely defended it, and, after a nocturnal fight, which lasted six hours and cost many lives, they remained masters of the passage.



HURSTMONCEAUX CASTLE
(Fifteenth century)

The insurgents retired into Southwark, and, in concert with the irritated citizens, it was resolved to delude them by promises of pardon, as had been practised with the followers of Wat Tyler. Both the chancellor and the ex-chancellor, the archbishops of York and Canterbury, had taken refuge in the Tower, whence they despatched the bishop of Winchester with a general pardon, under the great seal, to all such as should return to their homes. It appears that the prelate also promised a redress of grievances. His mission had the immediate effect of creating a division among the insurgents—one party being of opinion that they ought to accept the conditions; the other, that there was no faith to be put in them. Some began to retire into Kent: Cade accepted the pardon, and then the whole force began to disperse. But in two days Cade was again in Southwark, with a considerable host, who maintained that it would be folly to lay down their arms until they had obtained some security from government for the performance of its promises. Dissension, however, broke out afresh, and being awed by the warlike attitude of the Londoners they retreated to Blackheath, and thence marched to Rochester, where their feuds terrified their leader. Cade, who expected to be

[1] Bills of indictment were also found against the duchess of Suffolk, the bishop of Salisbury, Thomas Daniel, and several other friends of the deceased minister, who, fortunately, were out of reach of the insurgents.

[1450 A.D.]

murdered or delivered up to government, which had proclaimed him a traitor and offered one thousand marks for his apprehension, got secretly to horse and galloped across the country towards the Sussex coast.

He was closely followed by one Alexander Iden, an esquire, who overtook him and attacked him sword in hand. After a desperate fight, the squire proved the better man. The head of Cade was stuck upon London bridge, with the face turned towards the pleasant hills of Kent; and Iden was made happy with the one thousand marks. Pursuit was then made after Cade's companions, and many were taken and executed as traitors.[1] It was stated in a subsequent act of attainder that some of these men confessed that their object had been to place Richard, duke of York, on the throne: but this evidence is open to suspicion; and, moreover, it was not affirmed that the insurgents had been employed by the duke. But whatever may have been the caution, prudence, and patience of the duke of York, that prince's name was certainly put prominently forward at this time; and it is equally certain, if the question was to be decided by descent and birth, that York had a preferable right to the throne.

THE HOUSE OF YORK

We have shown in what manner the claims of the old line of the Plantagenets rested in Edmund Mortimer, earl of March. This Edmund, after faithfully serving the house of Lancaster in peace and in war, died in 1424; upon which, as he left no issue, and as his brother Roger and his sister Eleanor had died childless, his rights passed to his sister Anne, married to the earl of Cambridge, who had been condemned and executed for treason in the beginning of the reign of Henry V. Anne Mortimer had a son, the present Prince Richard, who succeeded to the titles of his paternal uncle the duke of York, as also to the lineal rights of his maternal uncle Edmund Mortimer, earl of March. But notwithstanding the growth of the doctrine of hereditary right—a doctrine which had gradually made way in Europe—it may be questioned whether the nation would have paid much attention to the genealogy of the duke of York, if the notorious and still increasing incapacity of Henry and the odium which his wife incurred had not forced the subject upon their attention.

The duke had been recalled from the command in France through the influence of Queen Margaret, and his post in Ireland was considered by his friends as a kind of exile. He had, however, acquired great popularity among the English and the descendants of the English in that country; and recently

[1] Thierry[h] contrasts this insurrection with that under Wat Tyler, seventy years before. The latter he considers as chiefly one of the Anglo-Saxon race, represented by the serfs, against the Anglo-Norman, represented by the *gentilshommes*—the gentry—and to have been the final term of the series of Saxon revolts, and the first of a new order of political movements. Had it succeeded, as an historian of that period expresses himself, all nobility and gentry might have disappeared from England. Thierry says: "Jack Cade, who in 1448 played the same part as Wat Tyler in 1381, did not, like the latter, make himself the representative of the rights of the common people in opposition to the gentlemen; but, connecting his own and the popular cause with the aristocratical factions which then divided England, he went so far as to announce himself as one of the royal family, unjustly excluded from the succession to the throne. The influence which this imposture had on the minds of the people in the northern provinces, and in that very county of Kent which, seventy years before, had chosen tilers, bakers, and carters for its leaders, proves that a rapid amalgamation was in progress between the political interests and passions of the different classes of men in England, and that a certain order of ideas and sympathies was no longer attached, in a fixed and invariable manner, to a certain descent or social condition."

The act here alluded to was an act of attainder passed against the Yorkists in November, 1459, when their enemies were triumphant.

(in the year 1449) he had gained much credit by the ability he displayed in the suppression of an insurrection of the native Irish. Resigning his command there, he suddenly appeared in England in the end of August, 1451. After paying a short visit to the king in London, he retired to his castle of Fotheringay. He was mute as to his intentions, but the court took the alarm, and sought to oppose him by the duke of Somerset, the nearest male relation to King Henry, and the head of the younger branch of the house of Lancaster.

But it was under Somerset's government in France that the loss of Normandy was completed; and this circumstance, added to that of his being in high favour with the queen, rendered him almost as unpopular as the duke of Suffolk had been. Two years were spent in noisy discontent and silent intrigues. Each party stood in awe of the other, and measured its ground before proceeding to extremities. Some dark deeds were committed by both factions, but the scale of guilt seemed rather to incline to the side of the court. Tresham, the speaker of the house of commons which had prosecuted the duke of Suffolk, was assassinated by some friends of the queen.

A member of the commons boldly proposed that, as Henry had no children, and was not likely to have any, the duke of York ought to be declared heir to the throne; but the proposer was committed to the Tower. The commons, however, passed a bill of attainder against the deceased duke of Suffolk, and agreed in a request that the king would be pleased to dismiss from office and from the court the new minister the duke of Somerset, and several lords and ladies related to Suffolk. The court resisted or evaded both measures. Violent quarrels arose between the adherents of government and the Yorkists; the former asserting that there was treason afloat, the latter that there were projects for depriving Duke Richard of his liberty, and treating him as the duke of Gloucester had been treated at Bury St. Edmunds.

In the beginning of the year 1452 the duke of York repaired to his castle of Ludlow, in Shropshire, the neighbourhood of which was devoted to the Mortimer family. He collected a considerable armed force, but, by proclamation, declared that he had no evil intentions against the king, to whom he offered to swear fealty upon the sacrament. A royal army was sent against him; but while that force went westward by one road, York marched eastward by another, and appeared before the gates of London, which were shut in his face. He then marched to the borders of Kent, where he probably expected to be joined by the malcontents who had been out with Cade. It appears, however, that few joined him, and when Henry came up with him, at Dartford, he agreed to a peaceful negotiation. Two bishops were the negotiators on the part of the king; and when they asked why York was in arms, he asserted that it was for his own safety, seeing that repeated attempts had been made to work his ruin.

Henry said that he cleared York of all treason, and esteemed him as a true man and his own well-beloved cousin. Notwithstanding the coyness of the men of Kent, it may be presumed, from the high tone maintained by the duke, that his force was considerable. He insisted that all persons who had trespassed and offended against the laws, especially such as were indicted of treason, should be arrested and put upon their trial. The king, or those who directed him, promised all this, and more. A mock order was given for the apprehension of the minister, the duke of Somerset, and York was assured that a new council, in which he should have a seat, should be appointed forthwith. Upon this Duke Richard disbanded his army, and agreed to a personal interview. With singular confidence he went unarmed and almost alone to the king's tent. One of the first persons he saw there was the duke of Somerset, who called

him felon and traitor, epithets which were retorted with interest. When York turned to depart, he was told that he was the king's prisoner.

Somerset, it is said, would have proceeded to a summary trial and execution, but this was prevented by the fears of the other ministers and courtiers. York was then sent to London and held partly as a prisoner, and, says Stow, "straighter would have been kept, but it was noised that Sir Edward, earl of March, son to the said duke of York, was coming towards London with a strong power of Welshmen, which feared so the queen and council that the duke was set at full liberty; and on the 10th of March he made his submission, and took his oath in St. Paul's to be a true, faithful, and obedient subject to the king, there being present King Henry and most of the nobility." York retired to his castle of Wigmore, and remained perfectly quiet till he was brought forward by the movements in parliament.

PROTECTORATE OF YORK AND FIRST BATTLE OF ST. ALBANS

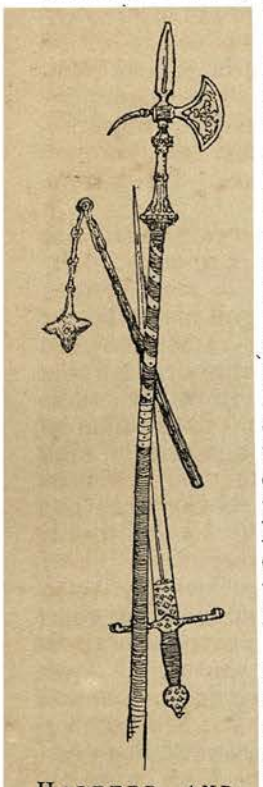
The uneasiness shown by parliament at the increasing incapacity of the king, and at the power of the queen and the duke of Somerset, brought about the recall of the duke of York to the council; and this measure was soon followed by the committal of Somerset, who was sent to the Tower at the end of the year 1453. On the 14th of February, 1454, parliament was opened by the duke of York, as lieutenant or commissioner of the king. For some time the court had endeavoured to conceal Henry's real condition; but the lords were now resolved to ascertain it, and an accidental circumstance afforded them a good reason for forcing the privacy of Windsor castle. Kemp, archbishop of Canterbury and chancellor of the kingdom, died; and as it was usual for the house of lords to confer personally with the sovereign on such high occasions, a deputation of twelve peers went to Windsor, and would not be refused entry into the castle.

They found Henry incapable of answering them or understanding them: in the words of their report to the house, "they could get no answer nor sign from him, for no prayer nor desire," though they presented themselves to him three several times. This report of the deputation was, at their prayer, entered on record in parliament, and was reasonably considered as authentic a testimony as could be procured of their sovereign's infirmity (of which there was no kind of doubt in the country); and after adjourning two days, they "elected and nominated Richard, duke of York, to be protector and defender of the realm of England." York, still advancing no hereditary claim to the crown, accepted of the humbler office, with all the limitations put upon it by parliament; but a weighty circumstance probably this time contributed to his moderation. Queen Margaret had been delivered of a son about a year before, and, though the outcry seems to have been almost universal that this was no child of Henry, the legislature could not entertain the popular clamour, but recognised the infant Edward by creating him prince of Wales and earl of Chester. In accepting this post as protector York took care to obtain the most explicit declarations from the peers that he only followed their "noble commandments."

In about nine months Henry recovered his memory and some degree of reason—perhaps as much as he had usually possessed. The court instantly claimed for him the full exercise of royalty, and York at once gave up the protectorate. The first use made of this resumed authority by the king was to liberate the duke of Somerset. This step and some others, which showed

that it was the intention of the court to restore the unpopular minister, irritated a great part of the nation, and induced York once more to take up arms. He retired again to Ludlow, where he was joined by the duke of Norfolk, the earls of Warwick and Salisbury, and other men of rank. Again Henry went, or was carried, with an army, towards Ludlow; but this time the duke, instead of avoiding him by taking a different road, anticipated his movements, and met him near the capital with an army equal to his own.

On the 22nd of May, as the royalists were about to continue their march from St. Albans, they saw the hills in their front covered with armed men, who were moving forward, and who did not stop till they came near to the barriers of the town. The duke sent a herald into the town, professing great loyalty and affection for the king, but demanding the person of the duke of Somerset. It was replied by or for the king that he would rather perish in battle than abandon his friends. Upon this, battle was joined. York was kept in check at the barriers, but another way into the town was pointed out; and, winding round part of the hill on which it stands, and crossing some gardens, the earl of Warwick entered St. Albans and attacked the royalists in the streets. York then forced the barriers, and after a very short contest the royalists gave way, rushed out of the town, and fled in the greatest disorder.[1] The duke of Somerset, the earl of Northumberland, and the lord Clifford were slain; the duke of Buckingham, Lord Sudeley, the earl of Stafford, and the unfortunate king were wounded—all by arrows. The duke of York found Henry concealed in the house of a tanner; his wound, though in the neck, was not serious. He was treated with mildness and outward respect; his conqueror conducted him to the noble abbey of St. Albans, where they prayed together before the shrine of England's first martyr.



HALBERD AND SWORD
(Fifteenth century)

When parliament met in the month of July, it did little else than renew the protestations of allegiance to Henry and his son. After a prorogation, parliament met again on the 12th of November, when the duke of York was appointed by commission to open the proceedings as lieutenant of the king. The commons thereupon sent up a message to the lords, stating that, as the duke of York had been appointed to represent the king on this occasion, so "it was thought by the commons that if the king hereafter could not attend to the protection of the country, an able person should be appointed protector, to whom they might have recourse for redress of injuries, especially as great disturbances had lately arisen in the west through the feuds of the earl of Devonshire and Lord Bonvile." The new archbishop of Canterbury, in his quality of chancellor, said that the subject would be taken into consideration by the lords.

Two days later, the commons repeated their request—refusing to proceed with any other business until it should be granted. York therefore was again declared protector; and he was to hold his authority till discharged of

[1] The number of the Lancastrians killed in this affair has been absurdly exaggerated in most of our old histories. One of the *Paston Letters*,[k] written immediately after the fight, says that only six score were slain.

[1455–1457 A.D.]

it by the lords in parliament. Still, however, parliament respected the rights of the infant prince, and it was declared in this session, as in the preceding year, that the protectorate should cease, in all cases, as soon as Prince Edward attained his majority. The ostensible reason for superseding Henry was his mental derangement. There is no positive proof that he was worse than he had been a few months before; but if he were no better, the step need not surprise us. It happened to him as to his reputed grandfather, the unhappy Charles VI; being known to suffer fits of insanity, people could never count with any certainty on his lucid intervals, nor put any trust in a king who was alternately declared to be sane or insane according to the rise or fall of a party. The house of commons and the people would certainly have gone further in the way of revolution; but the prelates, with one or two exceptions, and most of the lay lords were still averse to a change of dynasty. The duke gave some of the most important offices to his tried friends. No acts of vengeance were committed: it was considered that the Somerset faction had suffered sufficiently in the deaths of the lords in the affair of St. Albans. Not a drop of blood was spilled, not a single attainder passed.

Queen Margaret was not idle during this second short protectorate, and the powerful party of the court was put in motion. When parliament met, after the Christmas recess, in 1456, Henry, to the surprise of most people, attended, and demanded back, and received from the lords, all his authority as king. No doubt was raised touching his malady, and York resigned the protectorate without a struggle—apparently without a murmur. All the officers he had appointed were dismissed and replaced by persons devoted to the queen. Then York thought it time to look after the personal safety of himself, his sons, and adherents. He retired to his estates, where he kept his vassals on the alert, and most of the great lords of his party did the same. This was the more necessary, as the families and friends of Somerset and Northumberland, and the other lords who had fallen at St. Albans, openly expressed their determination to take a sanguinary vengeance.

In the end of February (1457) a great council was held at Coventry, and a sort of pacification was there effected between the Yorkists and the court party, the duke and his friend Warwick being compelled to give fresh assurances and oaths of fidelity. The king, who was no doubt sincere, whatever may have been the feelings of his wife and the courtiers, then endeavoured to reconcile York and his friends with the avengers of Somerset and Northumberland. London was chosen, by mutual consent, to be the scene of this great peace-making. After some days spent in deliberation, the king, who had assumed the character of umpire, gave his award, signifying that the duke of York and the earls of Warwick and Salisbury should build a chapel for the good of the souls of the lords they had killed at St. Albans; that both those who were killed there and those who had killed them should be held loyal subjects; that the duke of York should pay to the widow and children of the duke of Somerset the sum of 5,000 marks; that the earl of Warwick should pay to Lord Clifford the sum of 1,000 marks, and that the earl of Salisbury should release Percy Lord Egremont from the damages he had obtained against him for an assault, upon condition of Percy's giving securities to keep the peace for ten years. This award was accepted; the court came into the city; and king, queen, duke of York, and all, walked lovingly together in procession to St. Paul's.[1]

[1] Long accounts of the procession to St. Paul's are given in Hall,*f* Stow,*i* and Holinshed.*o* The duke of York and the queen walked hand in hand. The great quarrel was between these two.

THE BATTLE OF BLORE HEATH (1459 A.D.)

This was on the 25th day of March. In the month of May, Warwick, who had been allowed to retain the command at Calais, engaged, with great bravery, but without a due regard to the laws of nations, a strong fleet belonging to the Hanse Towns, captured five or six ships, and carried them into Calais. The powerful Hanseatic League complained to the English court, which called upon Warwick for explanations. Warwick presented himself at Westminster; but in a few days he fled, alleging that his life was aimed at by the malice of the courtiers, who had set on men wearing the king's livery to assassinate him.[1] He joined his father, the earl of Salisbury, and soon after they had a conference with the duke of York and his friends. He then hastened over to Calais, where he was so popular that his recall or dismissal by the government of Henry would have been but an idle ceremony. During the winter months he collected some veteran troops who had served in the French wars.

In England the Yorkists were not less active; and as the court was raising an army as fast as the embarrassment of its finances would permit, it became evident that a fierce conflict was inevitable. The Yorkists asserted, as before, that they only armed for their own security. In the month of September, 1459, the earl of Salisbury moved from Middleham castle in Yorkshire, to join his forces to those of Duke Richard, who lay in the Welsh marches. At Blore Heath, near Drayton, in Shropshire, he found himself in presence of a Lancastrian army, commanded by Lord Audley, who had thrown himself between the earl and the duke with the view of preventing their junction. The Lancastrians were far superior in number; but Salisbury, by superior generalship and the better discipline of his troops, gained a complete victory. Two thousand of the Lancastrians were slain, and Lord Audley himself was included in the number.

Salisbury joined the duke at Ludlow castle, and Warwick, the true hero of these unhappy times, appeared there soon after with the fine troops he had raised at Calais. The Lancastrians were not unprepared: sixty thousand men had been collected from different parts, and Henry was at Worcester with this force. After some fruitless negotiations, the Lancastrians advanced from Worcester against their enemies, who, notwithstanding the comparative smallness of their numbers, boldly awaited their attack. The positions occupied by the Yorkists showed the military science of Warwick and his father Salisbury.

As the Lancastrians approached, they were cannonaded with some effect; the lines of the enemy were imposing, and it was resolved to put off the battle for that day. During the night, Sir Andrew Trollop, who was marshal of the Yorkist camp, and who had the immediate command of most of the men brought from Calais, deserted with all his veterans to the standard of Henry. This defection was so important that it finished the campaign: the Yorkists broke up from the intrenched camp near Ludlow, and retreated in different directions without being followed.

All this happened on the 13th and 14th of October, 1459. On the 20th of November a parliament met at Coventry and attainted the duke of York, his duchess, his sons, the earl and countess of Salisbury, their son the earl of War-

[1] As Warwick was leaving the court, one of his retinue was struck by a servant of the royal household, and a dreadful affray followed. It is not proved that there was a design to murder the earl, but it is quite clear that the parties were in such a state that any accident must bring them to a collision.

wick, the lord Clinton, and many others. The duke of York had got safely to Ireland, where he was still popular. The earl of Warwick had retired to his sure asylum of Calais, conducting with him his father, the earl of Salisbury, and Edward the young earl of March, Duke Richard's heir. The court appointed the duke of Somerset to the command of Calais; but when that obnoxious nobleman appeared before the port, the batteries opened upon him and he was glad to escape to Guines.

While he lay there, the mariners of his fleet deserted to a man, and went over to their great favourite, Warwick, carrying all the ships with them. This gave the King-maker the command of the Channel, and after taking two small fleets, fitted out by the Lancastrians, he sailed to Dublin. From Ireland he returned to Calais, and then, crossing the Channel, he landed in Kent towards the end of June, 1460. He only brought fifteen hundred men with him; but manifestoes had been previously circulated, and the men of Kent crowded to his banner. As he approached Canterbury, the archbishop, who had been promoted during the first protectorate of the duke of York, went out to meet him and welcome him. The lord Cobham and all the knights and gentlemen in the neighbourhood soon joined his army, which was swelled to thirty thousand men before he reached Blackheath. On the 2nd of July the city of London welcomed him as a friend and deliverer; and he rode through the city accompanied by his father and Edward the heir of York, to whose beautiful person and promising appearance all eyes were turned. Five bishops followed in the train of Warwick, who, without losing time, continued his march into the midland counties.

BATTLE OF NORTHAMPTON (1460 A.D.)

He found the Lancastrians at Northampton occupying an intrenched camp, not unlike that which he and his friends had formed at Ludlow in the preceding year. There were other points of resemblance between these two affairs, for Lord Grey de Ruthyn now deserted the Lancastrians as Sir Andrew Trollop had deserted the Yorkists. The former, however, were not so fortunate in their retreat: they lost three hundred knights and gentlemen, besides the duke of Buckingham, the earl of Shrewsbury, and the lords Beaumont and Egremont. The unhappy Henry was taken prisoner a second time, but Margaret escaped with her son Edward, and, after many adventures, got into Scotland.

The victors marched back to the capital and summoned a new parliament, to meet at Westminster. This parliament repealed all the acts passed at Coventry the year before, alleging that that parliament had not been duly and freely elected. Then Richard, the duke of York, who had come over from Ireland, entered London with a splendid retinue. From the city he rode to Westminster, where he dismounted and entered the house of lords. It was an exciting moment: he walked straight to the throne and laid his hand upon the gold cloth which covered it; but there he paused—looked round—and did not seat himself on the throne. He had, however, at last made up his mind to claim it. His friend, the archbishop of Canterbury, asked him if he would not visit the king, who was in the palace hard by. The duke replied that Henry ought rather to wait upon him—that he was subject to no man in that realm, but under God was entitled to all sovereignty and respect. The peers maintained a dead silence, and the duke, leaving the house, took possession of the royal palace as his own.

In less than a week—on the 16th of October—the duke sent a formal demand of the crown to the lords, requiring their immediate answer. The lords told him that they refused justice to no man, but that they could give no answer without the advice and consent of the king. They, however, were forced to attend to the duke's paper, in which he traced his descent, and claimed as the representative of Roger Mortimer, whose right he maintained was according to all law preferable to that of a descendant of Henry of Bolingbroke, who had entered upon the thrones of England and France against all manner of right. Many of the great lords had attained to their greatness under Henry of Bolingbroke, his son, and grandson, whom it was now proposed to declare usurpers; and the Yorkists had irritated the tenderest susceptibilities of many of the lords by their repeated threats of resuming the estates and grants of the crown. At the same time, no doubt, they felt some sympathy for the inoffensive king, who, now that the queen was away, was pitied by the people at large. Indeed, a notion had gone forth that Henry was very likely to become a saint, and to be canonised, like his predecessor Edward the Confessor, whom he resembled in many respects.

As the duke of York would not brook delay, the lords waited upon Henry on the following morning. The captive king, or those who advised him, made a spirited reply, reminding the lords that he, as an infant, had inherited the crown which had been worn with honour by his father and his father's father—that he himself had been permitted to wear it without challenge for nearly forty years, and that the lords and princes had repeatedly sworn fealty to him. The lords were then requested to make search for arguments and proofs against the duke's right. The lords, greatly embarrassed, wished to have the opinion of the judges, but the judges asserted that such high matters could be decided only by the princes of the blood and the parliament, and refused to attend. The upper house then summoned the king's sergeants and attorneys, who were obliged to attend against their will, the lords holding them as bound by their office to give advice to the house. The lords deliberated and voted with an appearance of perfect freedom, just as if Warwick had not been nigh at the head of a victorious army; and on the 23rd of October they presented their objections to Richard's title. These were (1) the duke's oaths of fealty and the oaths they had all taken to Henry; (2) many acts of parliament passed since the accession of the house of Lancaster; (3) that entails had been made of the crown on the male line only, whereas he claimed through a female. The other two objections were thoroughly ridiculous; they referred to York not having borne his proper coat-of-arms, and to a declaration made by Henry IV which everybody knew to be utterly false.

The duke's counsel had an easy task in replying to these objections. Nothing was of much weight except the oaths, and these the duke offered to refer to the consideration of the highest spiritual court. The lords were compelled to acknowledge that the hereditary law was wholly in favour of York. At the end of this curious inquiry they suggested a compromise, which York had the moderation to accept. Henry was to retain the crown during his life, but at his death it was to devolve to Richard, and to be vested in him and his heirs, to the exclusion of Prince Edward, the son of Margaret of Anjou.

But there was a powerful party whose voices were not heard in these deliberations, and the energetic Margaret was at large exciting them to take up arms for her son. Soon the gentle hills of England glittered again with hostile lances; and hostile bands, collecting from all quarters, advanced to meet in two great armies, the one under the duke of Somerset, the earls of Northumberland and Devon, and the lords Clifford, Dacres, and Nevil; the other under

[1460–1461 A.D.]

the duke of York, the earl of Salisbury, and other lords. They met, on the last day but one of the year, at Wakefield, in Yorkshire, where Richard imprudently gave battle with forces very inferior in number. The onslaught was terrific; the men on both sides fought with savage fury, for the people had entered into the delicate questions of right and legitimacy, and their passions were worked up to frenzy. For a time the Yorkists maintained the conflict with a good hope of victory, but a sudden charge in their rear, made by some troops of borderers who had been brought up by Queen Margaret, proved fatal to them. The duke of York himself was slain; and of five thousand men who had followed him to Wakefield, two thousand remained upon the field. The earl of Salisbury was pursued and taken during the night: he was carried to Pontefract castle, where he lost his head.

York's second son, the earl of Rutland, a beautiful boy only twelve or thirteen years old, was stopped at Wakefield bridge as he was fleeing with a priest "called Sir Robert Aspall, who was chaplain and schoolmaster to the young earl." The poor boy fell on his knees to pray for mercy, but as soon as he was known, Lord Clifford, whose father had been killed by the Yorkists at St. Albans, plunged his dagger into his heart, vowing, by God's blood, that he would do the like to all of kin to York; and then the savage bade Aspall go on and tell his mother, the duchess, what had happened. England was not yet accustomed to such deeds, and a cry of horror ran through the land. Margaret vented what spite she could upon the lifeless body of Duke Richard; by her orders his head was stuck over a gate of the city of York, and a paper crown was put upon it in cruel mockery. Nearly all the officers and persons of note died fighting at Wakefield, where no quarter was given; but a few knights and esquires who escaped from the field were taken and executed by order of the queen at Pontefract and other places. This vindictive woman was mad for blood, and her fury was but too well seconded by such of the Lancastrians as had lost friends and relations in the war.

BATTLE OF MORTIMER'S CROSS AND RELEASE OF HENRY

Edward, earl of March, now duke of York, was lying at Gloucester when he received news of the death of his father, brother, and friends; he had raised a body of troops to reinforce the army in the north, but, being too late for that operation, he moved towards the southeast, with the intention of throwing himself between the queen's army and the capital, within the walls of which was the main strength of his party. The fate of Duke Richard, which was proclaimed in manifestoes, greatly irritated the vassals of the house of Mortimer, and thousands who had not moved before now left the Welsh marches and followed the standard of his son. Upon this Edward was encouraged to proceed directly towards the queen; but he found an enemy sooner than he expected, for a great force of Welsh and Irish had been detached under Jasper Tudor, King Henry's half-brother, and a dreadful conflict took place on the 1st of February at Mortimer's Cross, near Hereford. Edward gained a complete victory: thirty-six hundred of his enemies were left on the field; Owen Tudor, the second husband of Catherine of France, was taken, and, with eight other Lancastrians of rank, was beheaded at Hereford a few days after, as a retaliation for the queen's executions at Wakefield, Pontefract, and other parts in Yorkshire. Jasper, Owen Tudor's son, had the good fortune to escape out of the battle.

Before Edward could join him in the east the earl of Warwick was attacked and routed by the queen, who had followed the high northern road with good hopes of reaching London. At the town of St. Albans, which was held by the Yorkists, she experienced a severe check; but turning that position, she fell upon the army of Warwick, which occupied the hills to the south-east of the town. The combat was prolonged over the undulating country that lies between St. Albans and Barnet, and the last stand was made by the men of Kent upon Barnet common. At nightfall Warwick found himself beaten at all points, and so precipitate was his retreat that he left King Henry behind him at Barnet. The queen and her son found this helpless man in his tent, attended only by the lord Montague, his chamberlain. In this running fight the Yorkists lost nearly two thousand men, and on the following day Lord Bonville and the brave Sir Thomas Kyriell, who had been made prisoners, were executed in retaliation for the beheading of Owen Tudor and his companions at Hereford. On the 17th of February King Henry was freed again from the hands of his enemies; five days later, a proclamation was issued in his name, stating that he had consented to the late arrangement respecting the succession to the crown only through force and fear. Edward, "late earl of March," was declared a traitor anew, and rewards were offered for his apprehension.

But Edward was now in a situation to proclaim traitors, and to put a price upon other men's heads himself. His victory at Mortimer's Cross produced a great effect. As he marched eastward every town and every village reinforced him, and when he joined the earl of Warwick and collected that nobleman's scattered forces he had an army more than equal to that of the queen. The favour of the Londoners, the cruelties of the queen, and the conduct of the undisciplined troops which she had brought from the north made the balance incline wholly to the side of the Yorkists. It appears that Margaret and her party had no money, and that their troops subsisted by plunder. Wherever they stopped they laid the country bare, making free by the way with whatever they could carry off. After the battle they not only plundered the town of St. Albans but also stripped the rich abbey.[1]

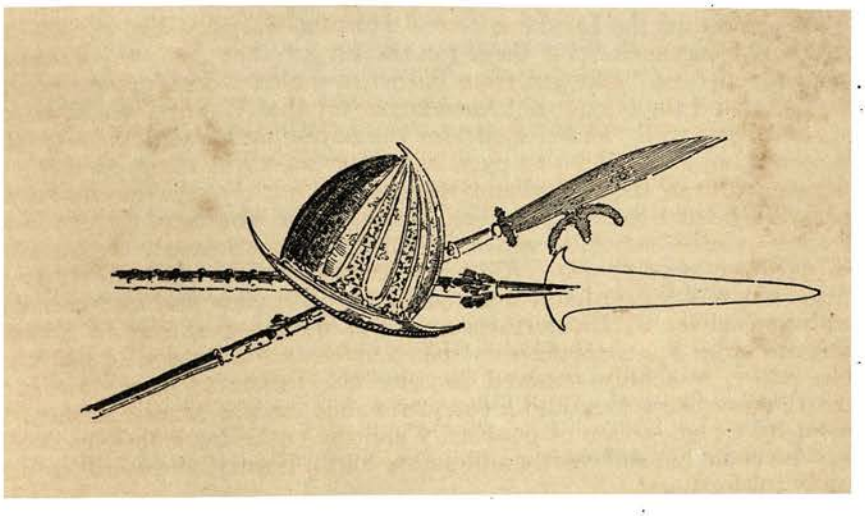
At the same time the Londoners were told that Margaret had threatened to wreak her vengeance upon them for the favour they had so constantly shown to her enemies. She sent from Barnet to the city, demanding supplies of provisions; and the mayor, not knowing as yet that Edward was at hand, loaded some carts with "lenten stuff" for the refreshing of her army; but the people would not suffer them to pass, and, after an affray, stopped them at Cripplegate. During this disturbance some four hundred of the queen's horse, who had ridden from Barnet, plundered the northern suburbs of the city, and would have entered one of the gates, had they not been stoutly met and repulsed by the common people. A day or two after, on the 25th of February, the united forces of Edward and Warwick appeared in view, and were received as friends and deliverers. The northern army was in full retreat from St. Albans, and Edward, who was a stranger to the scruples and indecision of his more amiable father, was fully resolved to seize the throne at once. He rode through the city like a king and a conqueror; and he was carried forward to his object by a high stream of popularity and the enthusiastic feelings of the people, who could not sufficiently admire his youth, beauty, and spirit, or pity his family misfortunes.

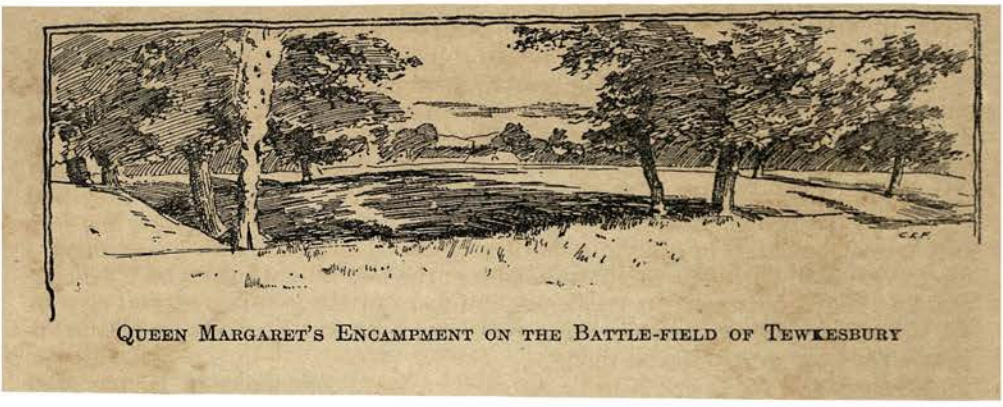
[1] The plunder of the abbey entirely changed the worthy abbot's politics, and, from a zealous Lancastrian, Whethamstede became a Yorkist.

[1461 A.D.]

The lord Falconberg got up a grand review of part of the army in St. John's Field, and a great number of the substantial citizens assembled with the multitude to witness this sight. Of a sudden, Falconberg and the bishop of Exeter, one of Warwick's brothers, addressed the multitude thus assembled touching the offences, crimes, and deceits of the late government—the long-proved incapacity of Henry—the usurpation and false title through which he had obtained the throne; and then the orators asked if they would have this Henry to reign over them any longer. The people with one voice cried "Nay, nay."

Falconberg, or the bishop, then expounded the just title of Edward, formerly earl of March, and drew a flattering but not untrue picture of his valour, activity, and abilities. Then they asked the people if they would serve, love, and obey Edward; and the people of course shouted, "Yea, yea!" crying, "King Edward! King Edward!" with much shouting and clapping of hands. On the following day, the 2d of March, a great council, consisting of lords spiritual and temporal, deliberated and declared, without any reference to the authority of parliament, which never met till eight months after, that Henry of Lancaster, by joining the queen's forces, had broken faith and violated the award of the preceding year, and thereby forfeited the crown to the heir of the late duke of York, whose rights by birth had been proved and established. On the 4th of March Edward rode royally to Westminster, followed by an immense procession. There he at once mounted the throne which his father had only touched with a faltering hand; and from that vantage-ground he explained to a favourable audience the doctrine of hereditary right and the claims of his family. The people frequently interrupted him with their acclamations. He then proceeded to the abbey church, where he repeated the same discourse, and where he was again interrupted by shouts of "Long live King Edward!" On the same day he was proclaimed in the usual manner in different parts of the city. At the time he took these bold steps Edward was not twenty-one years old.[c]





QUEEN MARGARET'S ENCAMPMENT ON THE BATTLE-FIELD OF TEWKESBURY

CHAPTER XVI

THE REIGN OF EDWARD IV

[1461–1483 A.D.]

BATTLE OF TOWTON (1461 A.D.)

INSTEAD of staying in London to enjoy the pageant and festivity of a coronation, Edward was obliged to take the field instantly and face the horrors of a war which became more and more merciless. The Lancastrians, after their retreat from St. Albans, had gathered in greater force than ever behind the Trent and the Humber; and by the middle of March they took up ground in the neighbourhood of the city of York, being, horse and foot together, sixty thousand strong. Their chief commander was the duke of Somerset, who acted in concert with Queen Margaret; for Henry still lay helpless at York, and Prince Edward, Margaret's son, was only eight years old. Instead of awaiting their attack in the southern counties, the Yorkists determined to meet them on their own ground in the north. This resolution was adopted by the advice of the earl of Warwick, who set out at once with the van of the army. Edward closely followed him; and, partly through goodwill to him and his cause, and still more from an anxious wish to prevent a second visit from the northern army, the men of the south flocked to his advancing banner, and by the time he reached Pontefract castle he was at the head of an army of forty-nine thousand men.

England had never before witnessed such a campaign as this. There was no generalship displayed;[1] the ordinary precautions and manœuvres of war were despised, and Yorkists and Lancastrians moved on in furious masses, with no other plan than to meet and strike. They met in full force at Towton on the 28th of March, and began a general combat in the midst of a terrible snow-storm. They fought from nine o'clock in the morning till three in the afternoon, when the Lancastrians, who were more numerous than their adversaries but not so well armed and equipped, were driven from the field, upon

[1 The rapid concentration of the Yorkist forces, the prompt advance, the unhesitating attack, but above all the determined onslaught, by which the Lancastrian centre was shattered, were so characteristic of Edward IV's generalship that we cannot hesitate to ascribe to his presence the victory of Towton Field.—RAMSAY.c]

[1461 A.D.]

which they left twenty-eight thousand dead—a far greater number than had fallen in battle on the side of the English during the whole French war.

Edward, who had none of the generous or merciful feelings of youth, had ordered that no quarter should be given. The earl of Northumberland and six northern barons died fighting; the earls of Devonshire and Wiltshire were taken prisoners and beheaded as traitors. The duke of Somerset, the commander-in-chief, escaped with the duke of Exeter to York, whence they fled rapidly to the Scottish borders, carrying with them Queen Margaret, her son, and her husband. The previous battles of the Roses sink into insignificance when compared with this mighty slaughter: the loss on both sides had hitherto usually ranged between the moderate numbers of three hundred and five or six thousand; but at Towton there perished, between Yorkists and Lancastrians, thirty-eight thousand men.[1]

Edward entered York a very short time after the flight of Henry, and having decapitated some of his prisoners and stuck their heads upon the walls, from which he took down the heads of his father and young brother, he continued his march as far north as Newcastle. The people submitted to the conqueror, whose hands were yet reeking with the blood shed at Towton; but the Scots, who had contracted a close alliance with Henry, were disposed to give him further trouble. But Edward, confident in his officers, and impatient for his coronation, soon left the army and returned to London. On the 29th of June he was crowned at Westminster with the usual solemnities; and he then created his brother George duke of Clarence, and his brother Richard duke of Gloucester.

The Scots, who had been gratified by the gift of their old town of Berwick, laid siege to Carlisle, and assisted Margaret in making an incursion into the county of Durham; but both these operations were unsuccessful. Henry, who was carried about by the Lancastrians, had a narrow escape from being made prisoner near Durham; and the Scottish army before Carlisle was defeated with great loss by Lord Montague, one of Edward's commanders. By the time the new king assembled his first parliament, which was not till the 4th of November, all opposition had disappeared, and there was no armed force on foot in England, except such bands of his victorious army as he could afford to keep embodied. As the chiefs of the Lancastrian party were all proscribed, or about to be so, as some of the peers were absent and others intimidated, and as the house of commons and the city of London were declared and enthusiastic Yorkists, no opposition was to be apprehended.

An act was passed to declare Edward's just title. No allusion was made to the mental derangement or incapacity of Henry, or to any of those demerits in the late government which might have justified this revolution. The position assumed was the high ground of legitimacy. After stating Edward's right by descent, the act proceeded to declare the three kings of the Lancastrian line tyrants and usurpers, and to recite how, upon the 4th day of the month of March last past, Edward had "taken upon him the realm of England and lordship of Ireland, and entered into the exercise of the royal estate, dignity, and pre-eminence, having on the same 4th day of March amoved Henry, late called Henry VI, son to Henry, son to the said Henry, late

[1 Ramsay,[c] who has made a particular study of the number of men engaged in battles, while agreeing that the combined forces at Towton "clearly exceeded those of any domestic battle" during the wars of the Roses, is still very conservative, and declares that the statements which placed the number at sixty thousand, thirty thousand, or even twenty thousand must be utterly rejected. On the same principle the thirty-eight thousand slain will shrink to thirty-five hundred.]

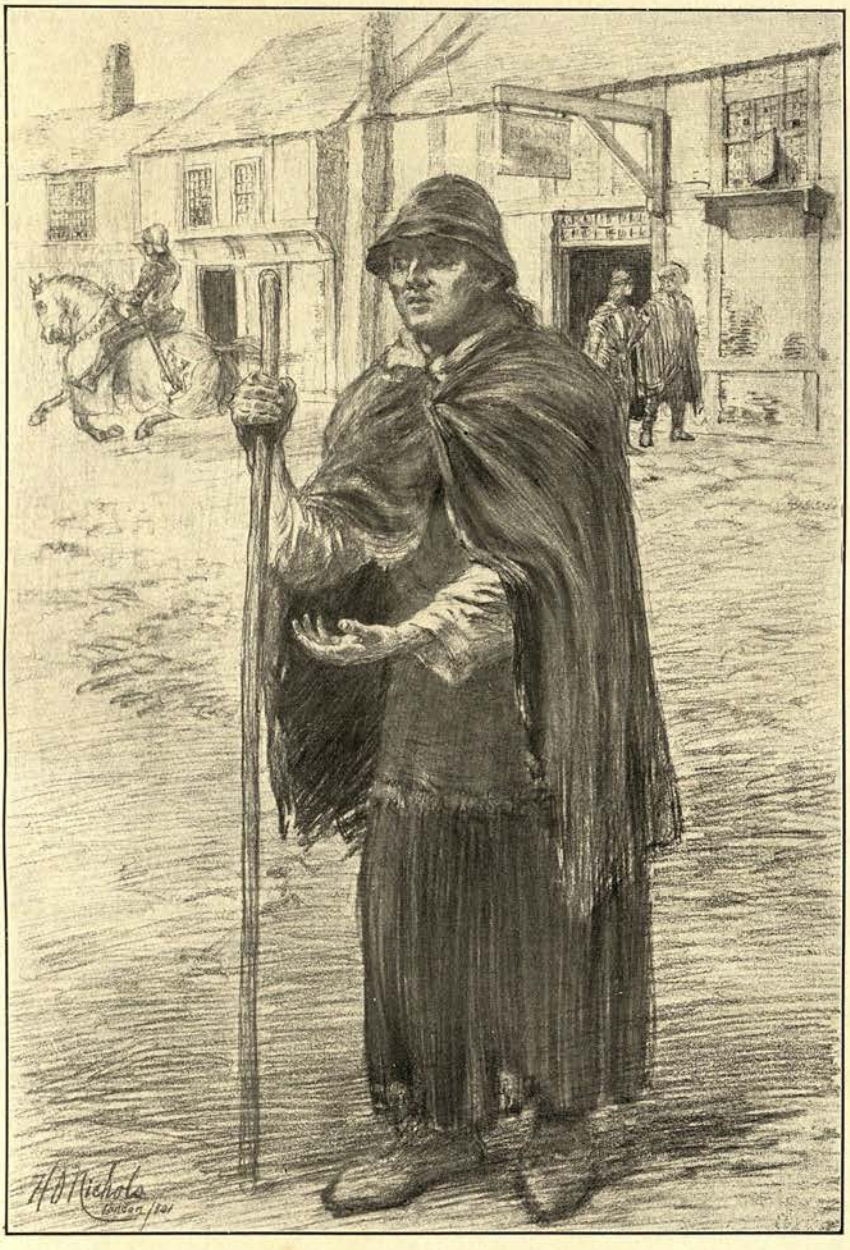
earl of Derby, son to John of Gaunt, from the occupation, intrusion, reign, and government of the realm." The act thus confirmed Edward's title, and fixed the commencement of his reign from the 4th of March, the day on which he had been proclaimed. The other proceedings of the parliament were in keeping with this act: the grants made by the three Henrys were resumed, with certain exceptions, and bills of attainder were passed against the expelled king, the queen, Prince Edward, the dukes of Somerset and Exeter, the earls of Northumberland, Devonshire, Wiltshire, and Pembroke, the lords Beaumont, De Roos, Nevil, Rougemont, Dacre, and Hungerford, and 150 knights, esquires, and priests. Considering the fearful thinning the party had undergone on the bloody field of Towton, this proscription must have included most of the great heads of the Lancastrian faction. As usual in such cases, the loyalty of the Yorkists was gratified and enlivened with gifts of the forfeited estates. Before the dissolution Edward made a gracious speech to the commons, thanking them for the "tender and true hearts" they had shown unto him, and promising to be unto them a "very right wise and loving lord."

THE REVOLTS IN THE NORTH (1462–1464 A.D.)

If the deposed Henry had been left to himself he would have found peace, and as much happiness as he was susceptible of, within the walls of some religious house; but Margaret was as resolute and as active as ever, and nothing was left to the proscribed nobles but their desperate swords. The queen, on finding her intrigues in Scotland counteracted by the money and the large promises of Edward, passed over to France. The duke of Brittany, pitying her forlorn condition, gave her a little money; but Louis XI, who had succeeded in the preceding year to his father Charles VII, was a most cunning, cautious prince—one that never gave anything without an equivalent, immediate or prospective, and who had even less family affection than the generality of kings. Louis explained how poor he was, how distracted the state of his kingdom; but when Margaret spoke of delivering up Calais as the price of his aid, he turned a more ready ear. He was not, however, in a condition to do much; and all that the fugitive queen obtained from him was the sum of 20,000 crowns, and about two thousand men under the command of Pierre de Brézé, seneschal of Normandy, who, it appears, raised most of the men at his own expense.

Such a reinforcement was not likely to turn the tide of victory. Margaret, however, returned to England and threw herself into Northumberland, where she was joined by the English exiles and some troops from the borders of Scotland. But she was obliged to flee when the earl of Warwick advanced with twenty thousand men: the French got back to their ships. A storm assailed her flying ships; the vessels that bore her money and stores were wrecked on the coast, and she and De Brézé reached Berwick in a wretched fishing-boat. This was in the month of November. In December, Bamborough and Dunstanburgh surrendered, on condition that the duke of Somerset, Sir Richard Percy, and some others should be restored to their estates and honours upon taking oaths of allegiance to Edward; and that the earl of Pembroke, the lord De Roos, and the rest of the garrisons of the two places should be allowed to retire in safety to Scotland. Alnwick castle was garrisoned by more determined men, but Warwick got possession of it by capitulation early in January.

Edward gave Alnwick to Sir John Ashley, and this circumstance converted Sir Ralph Grey from a very violent Yorkist into a very violent Lancastrian,



THE DUKE OF EXETER IN EXILE, BEGGING FROM DOOR TO DOOR, AFTER THE DEFEAT OF THE LANCASTRIANS AT HEXHAM

(From a drawing by H. D. Nichols)

[1463–1464 A.D.]

for Grey had expected to get Alnwick for himself. This kind of sudden political conversion became very prevalent. Somerset and Percy got back their lands, and their attainders were reversed in parliament. King Henry was now conveyed for safety to one of the strongest castles in Wales. Margaret sailed once more from Scotland, to solicit foreign aid. She landed at Sluys, in Flanders, attended by De Brézé, the duke of Exeter, and a small body of English exiles. Philip, duke of Burgundy and lord of Flanders, with all the adjoining country, was the same Duke Philip that had so long been the ally of the Lancastrians, and that had repeatedly sworn oaths of fealty to Henry; but in his old age he had become cautious and reserved. He had no wish to quarrel with the predominant faction in England; his subjects of Flanders were intolerant of all measures likely to interrupt their trade with the English; the duke therefore gave Margaret some money to supply her immediate wants, and sent her with an honourable escort to her father in Lorraine. But patience was a virtue little known to Margaret of Anjou, who, though she remained some years on the Continent, never remitted her endeavours to raise up enemies against Edward, and stir the people of England to fresh revolts.

As early as the month of April (1464) the Lancastrians were again in the field. The duke of Somerset, in spite of his recent submission, flew to the north, where Percy had raised the banner of King Henry, who had been brought from Wales to give the sanction of his presence to this ill-arranged insurrection. Lord Montague, brother to the earl of Warwick, scattered their forces or prevented their joining: he defeated Percy on the 25th of April, at Hedgeley Moor, near Wooler; he surprised Somerset on the 15th of May, at Hexham. Percy died fighting; the duke of Somerset and the lords De Roos and Hungerford were taken and beheaded, and their deaths were followed by a series of executions at Newcastle, Durham, and York. Sir Ralph Grey, who had been out in this affair with the Lancastrians, was taken by the earl of Warwick in the castle of Bamborough some weeks later. Edward treated Grey with the utmost severity; his knightly spurs were stricken off by the king's cook; his coat-of-arms was torn from his body, and another coat, reversed, put upon his back; he was sent barefoot to the town's end, and then he was laid down on a hurdle and drawn to a scaffold, where his head was struck off.

King Henry lurked for a long time among the moors of Lancashire and Westmoreland. About a year after the battle of Hexham he removed into Yorkshire, where he was recognised by some persons of the opposite faction, or, as some say, betrayed by a monk. In the month of July he was seized in Waddington Hall, as he was sitting at dinner, by the servants of Sir James Harrington, who forwarded the royal prisoner to the capital. As the captive king rode through Islington he was met by the earl of Warwick, who lodged him safely in the Tower.

KING EDWARD'S MARRIAGE (1464 A.D.)

The destruction of the greatest of his enemies, the flight of Queen Margaret, the captivity of her husband, the truces and treaties he had concluded with Scotland, with the king of France, with the duke of Burgundy, the duke of Brittany, the kings of Denmark, Poland, Castile, and Aragon, and the congratulations of the pope on his accession, seemed to prove that Edward's throne was safe and unassailable; but a sudden passion for a beautiful woman—the least dishonourable and ungenerous passion he ever indulged in—shook the throne until it fell; and he, in his turn, became for a season a fugitive in foreign lands.

Jacquetta, once duchess of Bedford, was still living with her second husband, Sir Richard Woodville, or Wydeville. One day Edward paid this lady a visit at her manor of Grafton, near Stony-Stratford. By accident or design Jacquetta had with her at the time of this visit her beautiful daughter Elizabeth, who was widow of Sir John Grey, a Lancastrian who had been slain in the second battle of St. Albans and whose estates had been forfeited. This young widow threw herself at the feet of the young and amorous sovereign, imploring him to reverse the attainder of Sir John Grey in favour of her innocent and helpless children. Whether the effect of this touching appeal was foreseen or not, it seems quite certain that the experienced Jacquetta contrived to turn it to the best account for the advantage of her daughter, and that it was through her ingenious manœuvres that the impetuous Edward was induced to contract a private marriage with Elizabeth at Grafton on the morning of the 1st of May, 1464. The fears of Edward induced him to keep this union a profound secret for some months; but on the 29th of September, having prepared his friends and gathered around him the relations and connections of his wife, who, notwithstanding their having been all of them Lancastrians, were not slow in changing their politics when Elizabeth became queen, he summoned a great council of the prelates and lay lords to meet in the royal abbey of Reading. There the king's brother, the duke of Clarence, and the earl of Warwick, who are generally supposed to have been incensed at the unequal and impolitic marriage, took the fair Elizabeth by the hand and introduced her to the august assembly, by which she was welcomed as their good and right queen.

In the month of December following Edward summoned another great council at Westminster, which settled upon his wife 4,000 marks a year. Early in the following year he began to make preparations for her coronation; Jacquetta, who was come of a princely line, suggested or seconded an invitation which Edward sent to her brother James of Luxemburg; and James came over with a retinue of one hundred knights and esquires to do honour to the coronation of his niece. On Saturday, the 25th of May, Elizabeth was paraded in a horse-litter through the streets of London, being most richly attired, and escorted by thirty-eight new-made knights of the Bath, four of whom were citizens of London; and on Sunday she was crowned at Westminster. The feasts, the tournaments, and public rejoicings which followed were unusually magnificent.

Up to this time Edward had left most of the offices and emoluments of government to the great family of the Nevils, to whom he indisputably owed his crown. Warwick, the eldest brother, was chief minister, general, and admiral; he held, besides, the post of warden of the West Marches, chamberlain, and governor of Calais—the last the most profitable of all. The second brother, the lord Montague, after his victories at Hedgeley Moor and Hexham, had received the title and forfeited estates of the Percys, earls of Northumberland, and he had the wardenship of the East Marches besides. The youngest brother, whom Edward had found bishop of Exeter, had received the seals as chancellor on the 10th of March, 1461, six days after Edward's accession, and he had very recently been raised to the archiepiscopal see of York. Other members of the family had found most liberal provisions in the spoil and estates of the Lancastrian families; and while Edward had employed himself in the pursuit of pleasure, the Nevils had had their own way in the council.

But now the Woodvilles, the Greys, all the relations and connections of the new queen, rushed to the table with an enormous and undiscriminating appetite, every man, in right of consanguinity, seeking a title, an estate, a

place, or a rich wife. The court had great influence in such matters; and as the fortunes of the family had taken a turn by an unexpected marriage, they seem to have determined to pursue the system, and actually contracted five or six profitable alliances in a very short time. In one of these matches they clashed with the Nevils. Warwick had solicited the hand of the heiress of the duke of Exeter for his own nephew; but by the superior influence of Elizabeth, this young lady was contracted to Thomas Grey, her eldest son by her former marriage. The Nevils were incensed at this measure, and other things trenching on their monopoly soon followed. The queen's father, now created Earl Rivers, was made treasurer in the place of their friend Lord Mountjoy; and, shortly after, the hitherto insignificant husband of Jacquetta was made lord high constable, in lieu of the earl of Worcester. Other great families were irritated by the queen's absorbing five heirs of dukes or earls for her five unmarried sisters. For a time the history of this reign is nothing but a scandalous chronicle of match-making and match-breaking, and selfish family intrigues.

THE FRENCH AND FLEMISH MARRIAGE NEGOTIATIONS

In 1467 a marriage was negotiated for Edward's sister, Margaret of York, whose hand was solicited by Charles, count of Charolais, heir to Philip, duke of Burgundy, and by Louis XI of France, Charles' deadly enemy, for one of his sons. This count of Charolais, who in a very few months succeeded to his father, and who obtained the name of Charles the Rash [or the Bold], had always been the declared friend of Henry VI and the Lancastrians; but he changed, like other men, on seeing Edward firmly established, and courted his alliance in the hope that he would assist him against Louis. Edward inclined to these proposals, and was in this probably seconded by the nation, which considered the trade with Flanders as a primary object, and which never was well disposed to French marriages and alliances; but Warwick, who hated the count of Charolais, insisted that it would be more honourable and advantageous to marry Margaret to the French prince.

Edward yielded, or pretended to yield, to his arguments, and commissioned the great earl himself to go over to France and negotiate the alliance. Warwick went with his usual magnificence; and the astute Louis, who beat all his contemporaries in king-craft, received him with the honours usually paid to a sovereign prince. The first interview took place at La Bouille, on the Seine, five leagues from Rouen, on the 7th of June. Warwick then proceeded to the capital of Normandy. "The queen and princesses came likewise to Rouen; and the king remained there with the earl of Warwick the space of twelve days, when the earl returned to England." During the whole or the greater part of the time that Warwick stayed at Rouen the king of France lodged in the next house, and he visited the earl at all hours, passing through a private door with a great air of mystery. This looks like one of the usual mischievous tricks of Louis, who must have known that the best way to weaken and distract the English government was to provoke suspicions and a rupture between Edward and Warwick. The earl arrived in London on the 5th of July, and he was soon followed by the French king's ambassadors, the archbishop of Narbonne and the bastard of Bourbon, who, it appears, were charged to put the finishing hand to the treaty of alliance.

But another more prevailing bastard had been before them. Under pretence of performing a joust with Edward's wife's brother, Anthony Woodville, who,

by marrying the heiress of the late lord, had become Lord Scales, Anthony, bastard of Burgundy, had crossed over to England while Warwick was absent in France. According to the chronicler, this visitor performed his deeds of arms much to his credit; but the encounter did not last long—"for," says Monstrelet,[e] "as it was done to pleasure the king of England, he would not suffer the combat to continue fierce any time, so that it seemed rather for pastime." Indeed, Messire Anthony had come on another errand than to get his bones broken in Smithfield, where the joust was held. He was commissioned by the count of Charolais to press the match with Margaret, and he had obtained the promise of Edward, who overlooked the commission he had given Warwick to treat with King Louis. If afterwards any obstacle arose, it was removed by the sudden death of Duke Philip, which happened at Bruges on the 15th of July, and which left to the count, his heir, the succession of states and territories which exceeded in wealth, if not in extent, the whole kingdom of France as then possessed by Louis. Such a suitor was sure to prevail over a weak young French prince with nothing but a narrow and uncertain appanage.

But weighty as were these considerations, they did not prevent the proud earl of Warwick from considering himself juggled, insulted, and disgraced; and as the king, who had resigned himself to the counsels of the queen's relations, took no steps to soothe his irritation, he soon retired, in the worst of humours, to his castle of Middleham. Edward, upon this, pretended to be in danger from treasonable attempts: he no longer moved anywhere without a strong body-guard of archers, and he, or his court, circulated reports that Warwick had been won by Louis, and that that king considered him secretly disposed to restore the line of Lancaster. The Nevils were now expelled from court; but the youngest of the brothers, George, archbishop of York and chancellor, notwithstanding the family resentment, put himself forward as an arbitrator and peacemaker; and chiefly by his means a reconciliation was effected in the beginning of the following year (1468).

WARWICK AND CLARENCE

Warwick presented himself again at court and in the capital, where he was hailed by the people. He appeared with the king and queen in some public pageants, but he could not tolerate the abridgment of his influence. The Woodvilles and the Greys, on the other hand, thought that he was still too powerful; and Edward, who desired a life of ease and pleasure, was annoyed by the stern interference of the man who had made him a king. It was soon understood that all this was likely to end in another field of Towton.

The duke of Clarence, second brother to King Edward, was considered next male heir to the throne; for Edward as yet had only daughters by his marriage with Elizabeth. The duke's position probably made him an object of suspicion and dislike to the queen, and at the same time of ambitious speculation to Warwick, whose society he much affected. The earl had a daughter, the fair Isabella, who, it appears, inspired the young prince with a sincere and, for a time, uncalculating passion. Edward and the queen's party endeavoured to prevent the union; but, in spite of all opposition, the duke of Clarence married the lady Isabella at Calais, in the month of July, 1469.

While the earl of Warwick and his brother, the archbishop of York, were engaged abroad with this ceremony, an insurrection of the farmers and

[1469 A.D.]

peasants of Yorkshire broke out, and assumed a very alarming character; and it appears that Warwick's other brother, the earl of Northumberland, who was on the spot, did little to crush it. The rallying words of the insurgents varied several times; but at last they fixed in a general cry for the removal of the queen's relations—the taxers and oppressors—from the council. Edward advanced as far as Newark; but his army was weak and unsteady, and he fled, rather than retreated, to Nottingham. From Nottingham castle he wrote letters with his own hand to Calais, beseeching his brother Clarence, Warwick, and the archbishop to come immediately to his assistance. These personages did not appear for some weeks, and in the interval a royal army, under the command of the earl of Pembroke, was defeated at Edgecote on the 26th of July. Pembroke fell in the battle, and it is said that five thousand of his men perished with him. The insurgents, in a hot pursuit, overtook and captured in the forest of Dean the earl Rivers, the father, and Sir John Woodville, one of the brothers of the queen; they carried these victims to Northampton, and there cut off both their heads. The earl of Devon, whose folly and pride had been the real cause of the wretched defeat at Edgecote, was also taken and beheaded.

MONT ORGUEIL CASTLE, JERSEY

(Captured by Maulevrier, Seneschal of Normandy during the wars of the Roses. In 1467 recaptured by the English)

The court believed that the insurgents in these executions acted under orders received from Clarence and his father-in-law Warwick.[1] These great personages, with the archbishop of York, now arrived in England, and being joined by the archbishop of Canterbury, they repaired in a very friendly manner to Olney, where they found Edward in a most unhappy condition: his friends were dead or scattered, fleeing for their lives or hiding themselves in remote places; the insurgents were almost upon him. A word from Warwick sent the rebels quietly back to the north; but the king was scarcely freed from that danger ere he found that he was a prisoner in the hands of his pretended liberators, who presently carried him to the strong castle of Middleham. Thus England had two kings, and both prisoners.

At this remarkable crisis the Lancastrians rose in arms in the marches of Scotland, and after some trifling successes in those parts meditated an advance into the south. Warwick had at this moment no notion of restoring Henry. In conjunction with the parliament, he summoned all loyal subjects to the standard of King Edward, and immediately marched northward to meet these new insurgents. The murmurs of the army compelled him to release his captive, and at York Edward was presented to the troops as a free and happy king. Warwick then went on and dispersed the Lancastrians: he took their leader prisoner, and brought him to Edward, who ordered his

[1] It seems, however, probable that the unfortunate men were sacrificed by the spontaneous fury of the people. The earl of Devon was beheaded at Bridgewater.

immediate execution. Soon after—but not before Warwick and his associates had exacted sundry grants and places—Edward was allowed to return to London, where, for the first time since his leaving Olney, he became really free. Then family treaties were signed, pledges given, and the most solemn oaths interchanged—each party binding itself to forgive and forget all that had passed. Edward was to love his brother Clarence as before; and even the insurgents of Yorkshire and other parts were included in an amnesty.

In the month of February, 1470, when this family peace had lasted about twelve weeks, the archbishop of York gave an entertainment to the king, the duke of Clarence, and the earl of Warwick, at his manor of the Moor, in Hertfordshire. As Edward was washing his hands previous to supper, an attendant whispered in his ear that an armed band was lurking near the house. Without his supper, and without any examination as to the correctness of this report, the king got secretly to horse, and, riding all night, reached Windsor castle. The duchess of York, the mother of the king and the friend of Warwick, laboured to dispel these jealousies and animosities, and another hollow reconciliation was brought about. But then there broke out an insurrection among the commons of Lincolnshire, who complained of the extortions and oppressions of the purveyors and other officers of the royal household. Although he believed that this new disorder was their own work, the king was obliged to permit the duke of Clarence and the earl of Warwick to take the command of some forces destined for its suppression. Edward, however, marched from a different point with a more numerous army; and, after some faithless and savage deeds, he came up with the insurgents before Clarence and Warwick could reach them, and beat them in a sanguinary battle which was fought on the 12th of March, at Empingham, in Rutlandshire. The common insurgents were permitted to depart, but all the leaders who had not fallen in battle were sent to the block.

FLIGHT OF WARWICK

The king then turned openly against his brother Clarence and Warwick, who, it was said, would have joined the insurgents on the following day. After some military manœuvres and long marches, the duke and the earl found it necessary to disband their forces and listen to conditions which the king offered by proclamation from the city of York. These terms were not very harsh, if they had been honourably meant; but they were not, and this was well known. Warwick therefore turned from the north, fled into Devonshire, and, with his wife, daughter, and several other ladies, his son-in-law Clarence, and a considerable number of friends, embarked at Dartmouth and made sail for Calais. But when, after a tedious navigation, he reached his old place of refuge, he found the artillery of Calais pointed against his ships, and on seeking an explanation, learned that a Gascon knight, whom he had left there as his lieutenant, was advised of all that had recently passed in England, and was resolved to keep the place for King Edward.

Warwick then sailed away for the coast of Normandy, to seek a temporary asylum with his cunning friend King Louis, who was right glad to see him as he was; for in the preceding year, as soon as Warwick had made his peace with Edward, it had been resolved to join the duke of Burgundy, who was at war with the French, and to send a great English army to the Continent. It was in the month of May that Warwick, Clarence, and their families landed at Harfleur, where the lord admiral of France received them all with great

[1470 A.D.]

respect, showing much gallantry to the ladies. Their vessels were admitted into the harbour, though they were numerous enough to excite some suspicion. Though a truce had been concluded, Louis was exasperated against his nominal vassal Charles the Bold, who since his marriage had become wholly English and Yorkist: he wore on all occasions the blue garter on one of his legs and the red cross on his mantle, which, adds the chronicler, plainly showed how fierce an enemy he was to his liege lord the king of France. When the duke Charles heard of the honourable reception given to the fugitives, and of Warwick's men being allowed to sell the captured ships and goods of his subjects in Normandy, he became still more furious, and, by way of reprisal, seized upon all the French merchants who had gone to the fair of Antwerp. Louis, who was prepared for a war, cared little for all this, and gave frequent audience to the fugitives at Tours, Amboise, Vendôme, and other places. He was happy in his own way; for never did sovereign so delight in political manœuvre and intrigue, and never was intrigue more difficult than the one he had now upon his hands.

RECONCILIATION OF WARWICK AND MARGARET

In the month of June, in the Château of Amboise, the fallen Lancastrian queen Margaret and her son the prince of Wales met (at first by secret appointment) their old enemy the earl of Warwick. It was a scene for Shakespeare. Warwick had accused the queen of an attempt to murder him, and he knew her to have been the person that had sent his own father, his friends, and associates to the block. Margaret had cursed the name of Warwick for fifteen long years of misfortune and humiliation. Through that nobleman's means her husband was a prisoner, and she and her son, after suffering the extremity of privation and peril, were exiles and wanderers, dependent on the stinted bounty of relations or political friends.

But even the vengeance and hatred of Margaret of Anjou could give way to higher considerations, and when Warwick joined in cursing Edward of York, and engaged to restore the Lancastrian line either in the person of her husband or her son, she took him to her heart as a friend and brother. The great earl, however, did not engage to do all this without driving another of his hard bargains. Margaret's son, Prince Edward, married the lady Anne, Warwick's second daughter; and thus, though he destroyed the prospects of Isabella, duchess of Clarence, he still provided, and in a more direct manner, that one of his children should be queen of England. "An unaccountable match this," exclaims Comines,[1] "to dethrone and imprison the father, and then marry his daughter to the son; but this was by King Louis' adroit management." "It was no less surprising," continues the chronicler, who wrote of state matters with the knowledge of a statesman and diplomatist, "that he should delude the duke of Clarence, brother to the king whom he opposed, who ought, in reason, to have dreaded and endeavoured to prevent the restoration of the house of Lancaster; but affairs of this nice nature are to be managed with great craft and artifice, and not without."

Up to this point it seems pretty evident that Warwick's scheme was to place his first son-in-law, the duke of Clarence, upon the throne instead of his brother Edward; but this plan would never have found favour in the sight of King Louis, whose assistance was indispensable, and even the all-prevailing Warwick might have doubted whether the Yorkists, to whom he must have addressed himself in this case, would have been mad enough to divide against

each other, and endanger a revolution which had been effected with such difficulty. The Lancastrian party, on the contrary, weakened though it was, was quite ready for another desperate plunge into the vortex; and Warwick, who was determined to recover his ascendancy and vast property, and to be revenged on him whom he considered the ungrateful king of his own making, by whatsoever means that offered, did not despair, when allied with Margaret and her son, of making that party believe in the sincerity of his conversion, though he had slaughtered their relations and friends in the field and on the scaffold.

CLARENCE TURNS TO THE KING

The duke of Clarence was at this time not much more than twenty-one years old, and, judging from all that is recorded of him, he must have conjoined a weak, bad head to a very indifferent heart. He was not, however, so far gone in fatuity as to be insensible to Warwick's startling alliance—perilous to the whole house of York—or to be blind to his own false position; and now an excellent negotiator came to him from his brother's court in the person of a fair lady. Comines,† who was actively engaged in some of these transactions as friend, agent, and confidential minister of the duke of Burgundy, and who had gone to Calais to keep the lieutenant-governor "true to his principles," tells us that one day a lady of quality passed through that town into France to join the duchess of Clarence. "But," he adds, "the secret business to be managed by this lady was to implore the duke of Clarence not to contribute to the subversion of his own family, by going along with those who were endeavouring to restore the house of Lancaster—to remember their old insolences, and the hereditary hatred that was between them, and not to be so infatuated as to imagine that the earl of Warwick, who had married his daughter to the prince of Wales and sworn allegiance already, would not endeavour to put that prince upon the throne to the exclusion of all the Yorkists. This lady managed the affair with so much cunning and dexterity that she prevailed with the duke to go over to King Edward's party, the duke desiring first to be in England. This lady was no fool nor blabber; and being on her way to join her mistress the duchess of Clarence, she, for that reason, was employed in this secret mission rather than a man."

This mission appears to have been the sole precaution taken by Edward or his court at this crisis. "The king seemed never concerned at anything," continues Comines,† "but still followed his gallantries and his hunting; and nobody was so great with him as the archbishop of York and the marquis of Montague, both brothers to the earl of Warwick: these swore to be true to him against all enemies whatsoever, and the thoughtless king put an entire confidence in them." His brother-in-law, Charles the Bold, was both prudent and active on this occasion: he got ready a strong fleet to blockade Harfleur and the mouth of the Seine; he sent Edward word of the very port where Warwick designed to land; and as the sea was an uncertain element, and the earl might break his blockade and escape his ships, he repeatedly warned him to take care of himself and put his kingdom in a posture of defence. But Edward only laughed at these fears: he said he wished his adversary were landed; and only begged the duke to keep a good look-out at sea, so as to prevent the earl from again escaping into France, when he, Edward, should have beaten him in battle on land.

THE RETURN OF WARWICK AND RESTORATION OF HENRY (1470 A.D.)

Warwick did not make him wait long. The duke of Burgundy's fleet, which lay in battle array at Havre, was dispersed by a storm: as soon as the weather cleared Warwick set sail with a fair wind, and on the 13th of September landed safely on the Devonshire coast. Edward at the moment was in the north, whither, it appears, he had been drawn by a feigned revolt, headed by some of the Nevils. The great earl had not been landed above five or six days before the whole country flocked to his standard. "Fully furnished on every side by his kindred and friends," writes Hall,[g] "he took his way towards London, where he expected to find more open friends than privy enemies." The capital, indeed, had been greatly excited by one Doctor Goddard, who had preached at St. Paul's Cross in favour of the king in the Tower; and, in the neighbourhood, the men of Kent had taken up arms.

As London seemed secure, and as news was brought that Edward had retraced his steps to Nottingham, Warwick soon changed his direction and marched straight towards the Trent, summoning every man between the ages of sixteen and sixty to join him. Edward, in the mean time, found that the men he summoned did not come, and that those who were with him began to desert. One day, as he sat at dinner, news was brought him that the marquis of Montague, Warwick's brother, and several other persons of quality, had mounted their horses and caused the soldiers to toss their bonnets in the air, and cry "God bless King Harry!" Edward was at this moment in Lincolnshire, near the river Welland; he instantly armed himself, and posted a battalion of his guards at a neighbouring bridge in order to prevent the passage of the enemy, for Warwick's van was within half a day's march of him. The lord Hastings was with Edward with a body of three thousand horse; but Hastings had married a sister of the earl of Warwick, and while the king had probably no great confidence in him,[1] the soldiers possibly had no great affection for the queen's brother, Earl Rivers, who was also in attendance. Edward, at all events, determined to flee; and as his bravery was always conspicuous, we must conclude that resistance was hopeless.

It happened that his quarters were at no great distance from the sea, and a small ship that followed with provisions for his army lay at anchor with two Dutch vessels hard by, apparently in the Wash. He had but just time to get on board these vessels, with a few lords and knights and about three hundred men. Before leaving the rest, they were exhorted to go and join the earl of Warwick, pretending great friendship, but at the same time to retain secretly in their hearts their old affection and allegiance to King Edward. The three vessels presently weighed anchor: not one in twenty of Edward's followers knew where they were going, and they were all without any clothes except the warlike gear they had on their backs, and no money had they in their pockets.

Edward sailed directly for Holland. The Easterlings, who joined the calling of privateers to that of merchants, and who at times appear to have been pirates as lawless and cruel as the corsairs of Tunis or Algiers, were then at war both with the English and the French; they had many ships in the narrow seas, and had done the English much prejudice this year already. Eight of these Easterlings gave chase to Edward's weak squadron. Edward

[1] Hastings, however, remained true to Edward, accompanied him in his flight, contributed to his return, and continued to serve him faithfully, with the exception of taking "bribes from France."

ran his ships ashore on the coast of Holland, near the small town of Alkmaar. Gruthuyse, the governor or stadholder of Holland, Friesland, and Zealand, was at that time in Alkmaar, and he, by his prompt protection, saved the whole party from captivity—for the Easterlings had brought their ships close in shore, and only waited the turn of the tide to board the three vessels. "The king," says Comines,*f* "having no money, was forced to give the master of his ship a gown lined with martens, and to promise to do more for him another time; and sure so poor a company was never seen before: yet the lord de la Gruthuyse dealt very honourably by them, giving them clothes, and bearing all their expenses till they came to The Hague, to which place he safely conducted them." From The Hague the governor despatched news to the duke of Burgundy, Edward's loving brother-in-law, "who," adds the chronicler, "was much surprised when he heard it, and would have been much better pleased if it had been news of Edward's death, for he was in great apprehension of the earl of Warwick, who was his enemy, and now become absolute in England." On the other side, King Louis, whose many agents soon carried him the intelligence, was overjoyed, and, being a religious sovereign, he gave orders that the nobles, the clergy, and the good people of Paris should make processions in honour of God and the Virgin Mary, and continue them for three days, with praise and thanksgiving for the great victory which Henry of Lancaster, lawful king of England, had gained over the foul usurper, the earl of March, as also in gratitude for the happy peace that would now subsist between the two countries. Processions were afterwards performed in all the principal towns in Louis' dominions.

Warwick was now possessed, in appearance, of all the power in England. From the neighbourhood of the Welland he turned back upon London, which he entered in triumph on the 6th of October, in company with Clarence—for as yet this son-in-law concealed his hostile projects. Warwick went directly to the Tower and released King Henry, whom five years before he had himself committed to that prison. "When he imprisoned him," says Comines,*f* "he went before Henry, crying 'Treason! treason!' and 'Behold the traitor!'—but now he proclaimed him king, attended him to his palace at Westminster, and restored him to his royal title; and all this in the presence of the duke of Clarence, who was not at all pleased with the sight." A great number of persons of the first rank, who were in King Edward's interest, and who afterwards did him good service, took sanctuary in different religious houses. The queen, with her mother Jacquetta and her three daughters, had fled to the sanctuary of Westminster,[1] where, being in great want of all things necessary, Queen Elizabeth was shortly after delivered of her first son.

Save that of the earl of Worcester, who was hated for his severity by the people, no blood was shed in this rapid revolution. We are left in the dark as to the proceedings of the parliament which met in the month of November, for its acts were erased from the rolls at the subsequent counter-revolution. It is stated, however, on good authority, that an act of settlement entailed the crown on Henry's son Edward, prince of Wales, and, in case of that prince's death, on the duke of Clarence. Warwick, of course, would take care to attaint his enemies and reward his friends: this "King-maker," in fact, was in all essentials king, and the imbecile Henry was still a captive, and in all probability a more unhappy one than he had been in his undisturbed prison in the Tower.

[1] This noted sanctuary was one of those exempted from suppression by Henry VIII. The church belonging to it was supposed to have been of the time of Edward the Confessor.

THE RETURN OF EDWARD

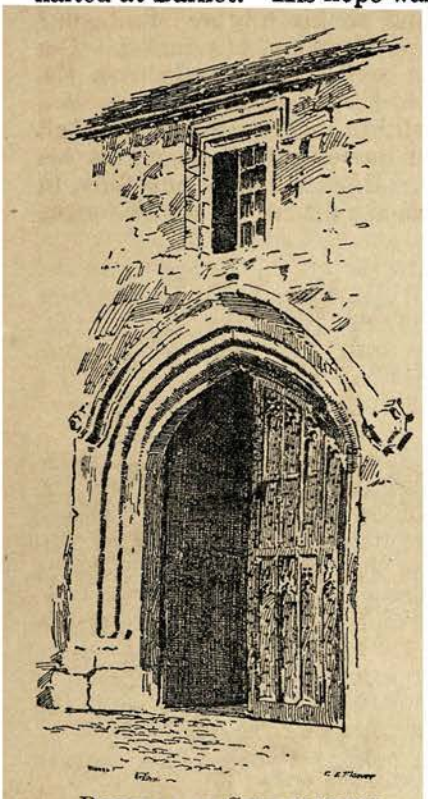
But if Edward had lost a crown like a game at cards, he regained it with equal rapidity. On the 12th of March, 1471, about five months after his flight from the Wash, he appeared with a fleet off the coast of Suffolk, having been assisted in secret by the duke of Burgundy, who played as double a part in this business as might have been expected from his great rival, Louis XI. He had issued a proclamation forbidding any of his subjects to join Edward, but, underhand, he sent him 50,000 florins, with St. Andrew's cross, furnished him with three or four great ships of his own, which he had equipped for him at Veere, in Walcheren, and hired secretly fourteen Easterling ships, all well armed. As Edward's troops, however, did not exceed twelve hundred men, he was deterred from landing in the Wash, on the shores of which was assembled a Lancastrian army; but, bearing to the north, he sailed into the Humber, and landed on the 16th of March at Ravenspur, the place where Henry of Bolingbroke had disembarked when he came to dethrone Richard II. Finding the people in the north not very favourable, he veiled his designs; and even at York he only engaged the citizens to assist him to recover his honour and estate as duke of York, solemnly swearing not to attempt to recover the crown.

A few oaths cost nothing in these times, and in the present case the necessity for dissimulating soon passed. At Pontefract Warwick's brother, the marquis of Montague, who already repented of the revolution he had helped to make, opened a correspondence instead of fighting, and permitted Edward's weak column to march within sight of his quarters, where a great force was collected. As soon as the Yorkists crossed the Trent they were on their own ground, and the people flocked from all sides to the standard of Edward, who then reassumed the royal title. In the neighbourhood of Coventry he found himself in presence of a Lancastrian army, under the command of the earls of Warwick and Oxford, and the duke of Clarence: now was the moment for the latter to act, and, making his men put the White Rose of York over their gorgets, he went over with colours flying to his brother Edward.

Upon this sudden manœuvre of his son-in-law, Warwick found himself compelled to decline the battle which was offered to him, and then Edward threw himself fearlessly between his enemies and the capital, which had forgotten the sermons of Doctor Goddard and the roast-meats of the earl of Warwick, and was once more all for King Edward. Comines attributes the enthusiastic reception he met with in London to three things especially: the first was, he says, the great number of his partisans in sanctuary within the walls, and the recent birth of a young prince; the next, the great debts which he owed to the richest of the merchants, who could only hope for payment through his restoration; and the third was that the ladies of quality and rich citizens' wives, whom he had formerly delighted with his gallantries, forced their husbands and relations to declare themselves of his side. Whatever were their motives, it seems certain that the return of the White Rose of York was hailed with enthusiasm by the citizens.[d] At least there was no resistance. The archbishop obtained a conditional promise of pardon; and on the 11th, when Edward entered the city and rode straight to St. Paul's, the prelate there delivered King Henry to his great enemy.

THE BATTLE OF BARNET (1471 A.D.)

The next day was Good Friday. On the Saturday Edward led his army out of London; for Warwick had rapidly followed him in his march and had halted at Barnet. His hope was to surprise Edward in London whilst he was occupied in the solemnities of the great festival of the church. The energy of the king was ready for every emergency. On that Easter Eve, the 13th of April, the advance guard of the Yorkists encountered the outposts of the Lancastrians and drove them out of the town of Barnet. Warwick's main force was encamped upon the high ground about half a mile beyond. In the dimness of nightfall Edward's army marched up the steep hill upon which the town is built, and in closed ranks and profound silence they passed through the narrow street and past the ancient church, and so on to the open plain.



DOORWAY OF CHURCH-HOUSE, SALISBURY
(Formerly called Audley House)

"It was right dark," says the eye-witness,[1] so that the king could not see where his enemies were embattled, and therefore took up a position much nearer to them than he had supposed. "But he took not his ground so even in front afore them as he would have done if he might better have seen them; but somewhat a-syden-hand" [on one side]. The ground to the east suddenly declines from the elevated plain; and if Edward took his position "a-syden-hand" in this direction, he would have obtained an accidental advantage of some importance. Warwick had ordnance to defend his front; and as the tramp of men broke the silence "he shot guns almost all the night"; but "it so fortuned that they alway overshot the king's host." They were nearer than Warwick's gunners thought, and they were upon lower ground.

There is something solemn in this array of two enemies in darkness and deep silence, each ignorant of the exact position of the other—the darkness and the silence interrupted at long intervals by the flash and the boom of a single gun. The morning came, but the obscurity did not vanish. There was little light on Barnet heath on that Easter morning, though peaceful thousands in other parts of England might have risen to see the sun dance, in the beautiful superstition that the firmament gave a token of gladness at this holy dawning. "The king, understanding that the day approached near, betwixt four and five of the clock, notwithstanding there was a great mist, and letted [hindered] the sight of either other," commenced the attack. In that mist English against English fought for three hours, madly, blindly—

[1 The quoted passages that follow are from the narrative of one of the "king's servants," an eye-witness, who wrote an account of Edward's progress and campaign entitled *A Historie of the Arrivall of King Edward IV.*h]

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the left wing of the Yorkists, under Hastings, beaten and flying, whilst the king was rushing on in the centre, unconscious of the discomfiture—the right wing under Gloucester successfully attacking Warwick, whose men, as Oxford returned from his pursuit of Hastings' flying Yorkists, mistook him for an enemy, and received him with a terrible discharge of arrows. All became confusion. Warwick fell fighting on foot; and so his brother Montague.[1]

The King-maker had had the advantage of numbers and of position. The mist, which even in these days of cultivation and drainage rises from the clay lands below Barnet, probably saved Edward from defeat. His random attack on that dark April morning was successful in its impetuosity, through the obscurity which prevented any combined movement of assault on his part or of resistance on the part of his enemy. Edward fought hopefully, in the ignorance that a third of his army had sustained a defeat. Warwick fought desperately without the animating conviction that in another part of the field he had been victorious. Seldom has such a great result been produced out of blind chance and confusion. Edward was completely master of the field.[2] On the afternoon of that Easter Day the king marched back to London and rode straight to St. Paul's; and there was thanksgiving and gratulation, and the steeples gave forth their merry peals, and the people shouted for the young victorious king; and the poor dethroned Henry, who had been led out to Barnet, was led back to the Tower.[b]

DOORWAY OF COLLEGE COURT GLOUCESTER

[But the one event of the greatest significance on this day was the death of the King-maker.] Richard Nevil (or Neville), earl of Warwick, was descended from a family of note of the north of England, who enjoyed for many generations the title of earls of Westmoreland. His grandmother on his father's side was Joan, daughter of John of Gaunt. He inherited the title of earl of Salisbury from his father, a younger son of Richard Nevil, and by his marriage with Anne, daughter of Richard Beauchamp (under whose tutelage Henry passed his youth), he became earl of Warwick. His descent from John of Gaunt made him naturally a member of the Lancastrian party, but the marriage of his father's sister, Cicely Nevil, to Richard, duke of York, connected him also with the Yorkist house. As first cousin of Edward IV and second cousin of Henry VI he was well fitted for the double part he was destined to play in English history.

[1 The number of the slain in this battle has been much exaggerated by Yorkist historians, as has also the number of troops engaged. Sir John Paston,[k] who fought under Warwick, is probably nearly correct when he places the number of killed on both sides at one thousand.]

[2 Ramsay[c] points out that, contrary to recent practice, no indignities were offered to the bodies of the dead leaders. But the magic of Warwick's name was so great that his body and that of Lord Montague were exposed for two days at St. Paul's, lest, the contemporary writer[h] explains, "feyned seditiows tales" should assert that they were still "on lyve."]

The career of the King-maker is chiefly remarkable as illustrating the grandeurs and the evils of feudalism. Warwick's landed property was enormous, comprising, according to the deed by which his widow made it over to Henry VII, upwards of one hundred and ten manors, in twenty-one counties, besides the city of Worcester, the islands of Guernsey, Jersey, Alderney, and Sark, and various places in Wales. Comines *f* tells us that at Calais he was so popular that everyone wore his badge, "no man esteeming himself gallant whose head was not adorned with his ragged staff." Stow *g* (*Annals*) says that "at his house in London six oxen were usually eaten at a breakfast, and every tavern was full of his meat, for who that had any acquaintance in his family should have as much sodden and roast as he could carry on a long dagger." In a time of civil war and a disputed title to the throne, such a man was naturally too strong for a subject. The restoration of order and the maintenance of the sovereignty of the state rendered inevitable the disappearance of the class so vigorously represented by the "Last of the Barons." *h*

THE BATTLE OF TEWKESBURY (1471 A.D.)

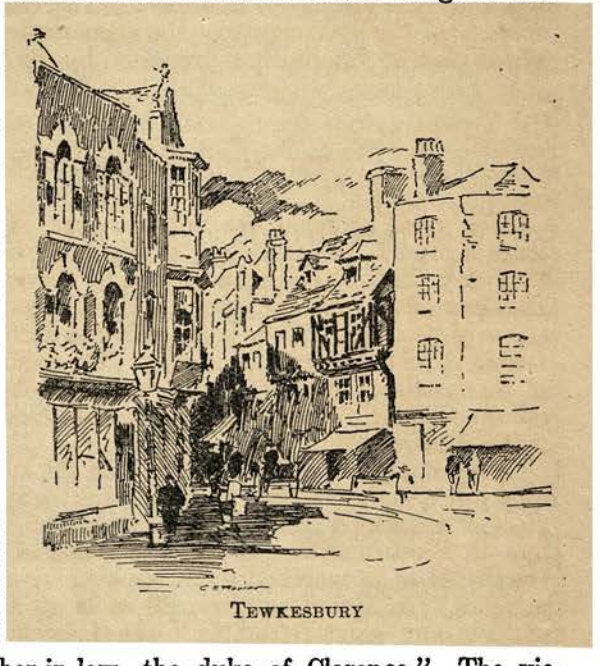
The great struggle was not yet over. Queen Margaret had gathered a large army of foreigners and exiles, and she landed at Weymouth on the very day that Warwick had fallen at Barnet. This force had embarked at Honfleur on the 24th of March, and had again and again been driven back by stress of weather. There soon gathered around the queen Somerset, and Devonshire, and other staunch friends. On Easter Monday the news was brought of the battle of Barnet. "She was right heavy and sorry," says Edward's official account. "She, like a woman all dismayed, for fear fell to the ground," writes Hall. *g*

They marched to Exeter, gathering the men of Devonshire and Cornwall as they proceeded, and then took the direct way to Bath. Edward supplied the place of the killed and wounded of his men, and assembled his forces around him at Windsor, where he kept the feast of St. George on the 23d of April. On the 24th he marched forth, seeking his enemies in the west. By weary marches, "in a foul country, all in lanes and stony ways, betwixt woods, without any good refreshing," the Lancastrians reached Tewkesbury, and there determined to make a stand. They took up a strong position "in a close even at the town's end; the town and the abbey at their backs; afore them, and upon every hand of them, foul lanes and deep dikes, and many hedges, and hills and valleys—a right evil place to approach." Edward had followed them, by forced marches, finding little provision on his way, and on the 3d of May "lodged himself and all his host within three miles of them." They met on Saturday, the 4th of May. Strong in their positions, the Lancastrians repulsed the attacking army; but Somerset boldly led his men into the open field by by-paths, and fiercely attacked Edward's flank. He was unsupported by Lord Wenlock, who was to have followed Somerset; was soon overpowered and driven back to his intrenchments, with great slaughter; and in the frenzy of despair he killed his companion-in-arms, whose treachery or fear had betrayed him in the hour of need. The king and his brother Richard pursued their advantage with their wonted impetuosity; and the unfortunate remnant of the adherents of the Red Rose "took them to flight"—some "into lanes and dikes, where they best hoped to escape the danger"; many were drowned at a mill-stream, "in the meadow fast by the town"; many ran

[1471 A.D.]

towards the town, many to the church, to the abbey, and elsewhere, as they best might. The kingdom was won.

It is now for the first time that we find Richard of Gloucester a conspicuous personage in our historical relations. He has been the companion of his brother in his short exile, and has returned with him to fight by his side in his great victories. He is now under twenty years of age. In his conduct at the decisive day of Tewkesbury, the gallantry of the knight is held to have been tarnished by the cruelty of the assassin. The usual account is derived from Polydore Vergil,[m] whose history was written in Latin in the reign of Henry VII. He says: "Edward, the prince, and excellent youth, being brought a little after [the battle] to the speech of King Edward, and demanded how he durst be so bold as to enter and make war in his realm, made answer, with bold mind, that he came to recover his ancient inheritance: hereunto King Edward gave no answer, only thrusting the young man from him with his hand; whom, forthwith, those that were present, George, duke of Clarence, Richard, duke of Gloucester, and William, Lord Hastings, cruelly murdered."



TEWKESBURY

On the other hand, there is the contemporary account of the servant of Edward IV, who says: "In the winning of the field, such as abode hand-strokes were slain incontinent: Edward, called prince, was taken fleeing to the townwards, and slain in the field." Another early record, that of Warkworth,[l] a Lancastrian, gives the same account of young Edward's death in the field, with a circumstantial variation: "And there was slain in the field Prince Edward, which cried for succour to his brother-in-law, the duke of Clarence." The victory of Tewkesbury was followed by the executions of the duke of Somerset and other Lancastrian leaders, who "divers times" were brought before the king's brother, the duke of Gloucester and constable of England, and the duke of Norfolk, marshal of England, their judges, "and so were judged to death." The judicial slaughters were rendered more atrocious than the ordinary ferocities of both parties after victory, by the circumstance that their fallen enemies were dragged from the sanctuary of the abbey of Tewkesbury, in spite of the promise of Edward that those who had there taken refuge should be pardoned.

On the 7th of May King Edward marched from Tewkesbury to Worcester. On the 11th he was at Coventry, where Queen Margaret, who had been discovered in a small house of religion, where she had taken refuge, was brought to him, and went on to London in the train of the victor.[b] [Within a few days after reaching London Edward had quelled all resistance to his authority and could securely reign.]

DEATH OF HENRY VI AND DOMESTIC PEACE

Margaret lived for five years the prisoner[1] of her conqueror, was then ransomed by Louis XI, and died in France about eleven years after the fight at Tewkesbury. The death of her husband, which immediately followed Edward's return to London, probably did not much affect her. The triumphant party had now evidently made up their minds to show no mercy; but that event was probably precipitated by a desperate attempt made on the 14th of May, by Thomas Nevil, the bastard of Falconbridge, Warwick's vice-admiral, to release Henry from his confinement and proclaim him once more. On the 21st of May King Edward entered London in great pomp with thirty thousand men, and on that evening, or the following morning, King Henry was found lifeless in the Tower.[d]

That Henry was made away with either by the order or with the knowledge of Edward seems to be pretty well established; and the linking of Richard's name with the deed, even if without possible substantiation, is most natural. The Yorkist writers try to make it appear that his death was natural. The author of the *Arrival*[k] says that when Henry heard the news of Barnet and Tewkesbury "he took it so great despite, ire, and indignation that of pure displeasure and melancholy he died." Warkworth[l] says that he was put to death in the presence of Gloucester, "and on the morrow he was chested, and brought to St. Paul's and his face was open that everyone might see him; and in lying he bled on the pavement there." More[o] and Polydore Vergil[m] had heard it said that Gloucester slew him with his own hand, and Fabyan[n] has it that "he was sticked with a dagger by the hand of the duke of Gloucester."[a]

The dead body, surrounded by guards and torches, was exhibited to the people in St. Paul's, and afterwards quietly buried in the abbey of Chertsey. But this unhappy prince was not allowed rest even in the grave. A few years after, Gloucester, then Richard III, was made uneasy by the popular belief that miracles were wrought at his tomb, and he ordered his bones to be removed—some say to Windsor; then, on the fall of Richard, Henry VII wished to bring them back to Westminster, but it appears that they could not be found.[d]

All the enemies of the house of York were swept away by the sword or the axe, or were in prison or in exile. Margaret of Anjou was a captive in the Tower, with a small allowance. The duke of Exeter, who had escaped from Barnet to the sanctuary of Westminster, perished at sea the next year. Vere, the earl of Oxford, after having kept the coast of the Channel in alarm with a little fleet, and taken St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall, surrendered upon condition that his life should be spared, and was confined for eleven years in the castle of Ham. The earl of Pembroke, with his nephew, the young earl of Richmond, was cast by a storm on the coast of Brittany, and remained there during the reign of Edward. Some who had been hostile to the Yorkists, such as Doctor Morton and Sir John Fortescue, submitted to the favourite of fortune. Many persons, who, as Fuller somewhere says, in playing their cards could scarcely know which was the trump, easily obtained their pardons.

For a while the court of Edward was one of the most gay and magnificent in Europe, as indeed it was before the sudden revolution of 1470.[c] There is a very curious account of the reception, by Edward and his queen, in 1466, of a

[1] She was at first confined in the Tower of London, afterwards at Windsor, and then at Wallingford. All that Edward would allow for the support of herself and servants was a pittance of five marks per week.[n]

[1471-1472 A.D.]

Bohemian nobleman, in which a native of Nuremberg, one of his suite, furnishes some details of the wearisome ceremonies of the royal life. The Bohemian lord—having been feasted himself, whilst the king was making presents to trumpeters, pipers, players, and heralds, in the most lavish manner—"was conducted into a costly ornamented room where the queen was to dine; and there he was seated in a corner, that he might see all the expensive provisions. The queen sat down on a golden stool alone at her table; and her mother and the king's sister stood far below her. And when the queen spoke to her mother, or to the king's sister, they kneeled down every time before her, and remained kneeling until the queen drank water. And all her ladies and maids, and those who waited upon her, even great lords, had to kneel while she was eating, which continued three hours. After dinner there was dancing, but the queen remained sitting upon her stool, and her mother kneeled before her." It is scarcely to be wondered that King Edward too frequently stole away from this frightful etiquette, to be merry after his own vicious fashion; or that he "would a hunting ride, some pastime for to see." The court fool, with his jests and his antics, must have been a welcome relief to the three hours of dining and kneeling.

But in the court of England, after the re-establishment of the house of York, there were more rational occupations than the processions and banquets of the great days of ceremony, as that day was on which the Bohemian lord was received. There were literary tastes in those times which had so recently witnessed the waste and ferocity of civil war. Edward was himself a reader. In his "Wardrobe Accounts" there are entries for binding his Titus Livius, his Froissart, his Josephus, and his Bible; as well as for the cost of fastening chests to remove his books from London to Eltham.

The brother of the queen, Anthony, Earl Rivers, was the patron of Caxton, who brought his art to England in 1474. For Caxton's press the accomplished Rivers translated *The Dictes and Sayings of Philosophers*, which was printed at Westminster in 1477; and he afterwards translated two other works for Caxton. England's first printer was intimately connected with the family of Edward IV. He had "a yearly fee," as he says, from Margaret, the duchess of Burgundy, King Edward's sister, while he resided at Bruges; and by her command he proceeded with his *Historyes of Troye*, a translation from the French, which the critical duchess looked over, and found "defaute" of his English. He dedicates the first book which he printed to the duke of Clarence. He receives a payment, by order of Edward IV, in 1479, of the large sum of twenty pounds "for certain causes and matters performed by him for the said lord the king." It is manifest that, at a period when the number of original writers was very small, the king and his court lent a willing aid to the great discovery which was to make knowledge a common property, in causing, as Caxton says Earl Rivers did, "books to be imprinted and so multiplied to go abroad among the people."

The public triumphs of the house of York seem to have done little to secure the brotherly union of its members. The great earl of Warwick had two daughters: one married to the duke of Clarence, the other contracted to the son of Henry VI, who fell at Tewkesbury in his seventeenth year. They were the heiresses of the enormous possessions of Warwick; and Clarence appears to have had no inclination to divide the great wealth of the Nevils and the Beauchamps with any other. He concealed Anne, the younger sister, from the pursuit of Gloucester, who was her suitor. In February, 1472, Sir John Paston[k] writes that the family are "not all in charity," adding, "the king entreateth my lord of Clarence for my lord of Gloucester; and, as it is said, he

answereth that he may well have my lady his sister-in-law, but they shall part no livelihood, as he saith."

Gloucester was not a man to be put off in this fashion by his brother; so he did contrive "to have my lady his sister-in-law," discovering her, as the gossip of the day relates, in the disguise of a cook-maid. The quarrel went on; and in April, 1473, Sir John Paston again writes: "The world seemeth queasy here; for the most part that be about the king have sent hither for their harness, and it is said for certain that the duke of Clarence maketh him big in that he can, showing as he would but deal with the duke of Gloucester; but the king intendeth, eschewing all inconvenience, to be as big as they both, and a stifler atween them." The question how the "livelihood" should be parted was settled in 1474 by the parliament dividing the great fortune of Warwick between the two royal brothers, leaving the widow of Warwick, most unjustly, a very wretched provision. Richard had been appointed chief seneschal of the duchy of Lancaster, and resided officially at Pontefract castle. The son and only child of Richard and Anne was born in 1473 at Middleham castle, which had been the property of the earl of Warwick.

EDWARD AND LOUIS XI

There had been three years of repose in England. The quiet suited ill with the restless nature of King Edward. His voluptuous habits had produced their usual consequence, satiety. A war with France was ever popular in England, and the king employed the years of 1473 and 1474 in preparation for a new conquest of the provinces which had been lost during the minority of Henry VI. The duke of Burgundy and the duke of Brittany urged on the revival of the ancient claims to the French crown. The parliament voted supplies with a profuse liberality, which the taxpayers did not entirely approve. "The king goeth so near us in this country, both to poor and rich, that I wot not how we shall live, unless the world amend." On the 20th of June, 1475, Edward sailed from Sandwich with fifteen hundred men-at-arms, fifteen thousand archers, and a great number of foot-soldiers and artillery. Comines[1] says that embarking and landing these forces at Calais occupied three weeks.

Before the king sailed he sent a herald with a letter, in which he demanded the crown from Louis XI as his right and inheritance—written, adds Comines, in such an elegant style "that I can scarcely believe any Englishman wrote it." The purity of the language and the arrogance of the demand were alike indifferent to the French king, who took the herald into a private room, gave him a magnificent present of 300 crowns, and "was much revived by what he got out of" Edward's messenger. The whole account of this invasion of France, as told by the most interesting of the early memoir-writers, is a comedy full of amusement, instead of the monotonous tragedy that is the more natural and usual chronicle of the quarrels of princes. As an exhibition of character, the narrative of Comines is perfect.

The duke of Burgundy had deceived Edward as to the amount of assistance he would render in the attempt upon France. He gave the English a cold welcome at Péronne. The constable of Saint-Pol, instead of being friendly to Edward and delivering up the fortress of St. Quentin, fired upon an English detachment who went to take possession of the place. Louis of France, who was in real terror at the presence of the English king, had a scheme for getting rid of him, which he wisely preferred to fighting. He had a trick of

[1475 A.D.]

whispering in people's ears; and he whispered to Comines to send for a certain lord's servant, and propose to him to go disguised as a herald to the camp of the English king. The man was frightened; but Louis tutored him well, and he was dressed up with a coat-of-arms made out of the banner of a trumpet. Louis himself had no heralds, as other princes had. "He was not so stately or vain." The mock herald was well received at the English camp, and he played his part so well that a negotiation was opened through commissioners. The original demand of Edward for the French crown first dwindled to a claim for Normandy and Gascony, and ended in a proposal for a large pension, as the French called it, as the condition of leaving France.

The wily Louis feasted the English at Amiens; sent Edward three hundred cart-loads of the best wines of France, and bribed his nobles without stint.[1] The two kings met at Picquigny, and there a peace was sworn between them, upon the conditions of present and future money payments; of a marriage between the son of Louis and a daughter of Edward; and the release of Margaret of Anjou. Then Louis invited Edward to Paris, "in a jocular way," saying he would assign him the cardinal Bourbon for his confessor, who would willingly absolve him if he committed any sin. Edward was delighted with the raillery, and promised to come, somewhat to the discomposure of Louis; for he whispered to Comines, "His predecessors have been too often in Paris and Normandy already, and I do not care for his company so near." One only of the greater nobles of the train of Edward evinced displeasure at these negotiations, in which the king of France had cajoled and degraded the English—that one was Richard of Gloucester. At the interview between the kings Gloucester was not present, "as being averse to the treaty." That man is truly unfortunate whose best actions are held to proceed from the worst motives. One who lived in a court where there was little display of high principle, says of Richard: "Out of the deep root of ambition it sprang that, as well at the treaty of peace that passed between Edward IV and Louis XI of France, concluded by interviews of both kings at Picquigny, as upon all other occasions, Richard, the duke of Gloucester, stood ever upon the side of honour, raising his own reputation to the disadvantage of the king his brother, and drawing the eyes of all, especially those of the nobles and soldiers, upon himself." Comines asked a Gascon in the English service how many battles Edward had won, and the answer was, nine: how many he had lost—and the reply was, never but one, and that was this in which the French had outwitted him.

With the Treaty of Picquigny, its bribes and its cajoleries, its heartless compacts and hollow friendships, the chivalrous grandeur of England had come to an end. The pageant was played out. The world was henceforward to be governed by that statecraft of which Louis XI was the greatest example. There was one prince who continued to rely upon force, with an occasional mixture of fraud, in which game he was a child when opposed to his practised adversary. His high-blown pride was humbled at Granson and Morat by the Swiss, whose poverty he despised; and Charles of Burgundy perished in his mad career in 1477. Edward returned to England more disgraced than his brother-in-law, when the mountaineers broke into his camp and carried off his gold and his jewels, his rich armour and his silk pavilions.

[1 It is related that the caution of Hastings, then high chamberlain, led him to refuse to give a receipt for a "gift" which Louis had made him. He was anxious to receive the gold, however. "This present," he said to Louis' agent, "proceeds from your master's generosity, not from any request of mine; if you have a mind I should receive it you may put it in my sleeve."]

Edward came home to an indignant people with a disappointed army. His soldiers compensated themselves for the loss of plunder in France by pillaging their own countrymen. The king went in person with the judges to try the offenders, and hung without mercy everyone who was apprehended for the least theft.

THE DEATH OF CLARENCE; EDWARD'S LAST YEARS

The marriages of the great, at this period, when the increase of possessions appears to have been the dominant passion, were a fruitful source of dissimulation and enmity. Clarence had lost his wife by poison, and the duchess of Burgundy was a widow. There is a letter of Edward to his ambassador in Scotland, in which, in 1477, he writes that the king of Scots desires two marriages connected with the royal line: one that the duke of Clarence should marry a sister of the king of Scots, and that a brother of that king, the duke of Albany, should marry the duchess of Burgundy. "Ye shall say that, for so much as this desire proceedeth of his entire love and affection anent us, we thank him as heartily as we can; and for so much also as, after the old usages of this our realm, no estate or person honourable communeth of marriage within the year of their doole (widowhood), we therefore as yet cannot conveniently speak in this matter. Nathless, when we shall find time convenable (suitable) we shall feel their dispositions, and thereupon show unto him the same in all goodly haste."

The king did feel the disposition of his brother Clarence, and found that the ambitious duke desired to wed the only daughter and heir of Charles of Burgundy, in which desire he was seconded by the widowed duchess, her stepmother: Edward resolutely opposed this scheme, and the brothers became enemies. Clarence estranged himself from his brother's court. At this time two of his dependents, Thomas Burdett and John Stacy, were accused of having "worked and calculated by art magic, necromancy, and astronomy the death and final destruction of the king and prince," and they were tried and executed. Clarence asserted their innocence before the council, and was immediately arrested by the king and committed to the Tower on the 16th of January, 1478. Edward forced on his brother's condemnation, by appearing in person to maintain a charge of treason against him. The obsequious peers found the imprudent prince guilty, and sentence of death was pronounced upon him by the duke of Buckingham, who acted as high steward. On the 7th of February the commons, by their speaker, demanded the execution of the sentence, and within ten days it was announced that the duke had died in the Tower. The drowning in a butt of malmsey wine was a rumour of the period. The suspicion that the duke of Gloucester was implicated in the condemnation of Clarence rests upon no evidence whatever. The insinuation against him is thus stated by More: "Some wise men also ween that his drift, covertly conveyed, lacked not in helping forth his brother of Clarence to his death; which he resisted openly, howbeit somewhat, as men deemed, more faintly than he that were heartily minded to his wealth."

The few remaining years of the life of King Edward were not years of ease and prosperity. The chroniclers say that his remorse for the death of Clarence was constant and bitter, and that "he was wont to cry out in a rage, 'O unfortunate brother, for whose life no man in this world would once make request!'" England, in 1479, was visited with a frightful pestilence. Whilst his subjects in London and elsewhere were perishing around him,

[1479-1483 A.D.]

Edward was enduring bitter mortification in his private affairs. He had a passion for contracting alliances for his children even while they were in their cradles. His eldest daughter, Elizabeth, was contracted, as we have seen, to the dauphin of France, by the Treaty of Picquigny; but Louis began to give indications that the treaty would only endure as long as suited his convenience. His daughter Cecily was engaged to the son and heir of the king of Scotland, and the dowry of the lady had commenced to be paid by instalments. From the time of the death of James I, who was murdered in a conspiracy of his nobles in 1437, the kingdom had been the scene of intestine conflicts. James II came to the crown when six years old, and his reign was a constant struggle with the great families of Douglas and Livingston and other feudal lords. He was killed at the siege of Roxburgh in 1460.

James III was also a minor when he came to the throne. He was of a contemplative and indolent nature, and fell into the hands of favourites. The Boyds, who had long governed, were at last dispossessed of their power; and the duke of Albany and the earl of Mar, the brothers of James, took the lead in the management of affairs, but soon excited the suspicion of the king that they aspired to the royal authority. Mar was put to death. Albany escaped to France. At this juncture James III and Edward IV quarrelled. The marriage treaty was broken off, and in 1480 there was war between England and Scotland. The duke of Gloucester, who was warden of the Marches, commanded the English forces. Berwick was invested, but without success, and the two armies were content with occasional forays upon the borders. In 1482 the duke of Albany was encouraged by Edward in a rebellion against his reigning brother; and he engaged to hold Scotland as a fief of England, and to surrender Berwick.

That important fort was now besieged by Gloucester and Albany. James raised an army and marched towards the borders; but his turbulent nobles seized the king, and hanged his associates, two of whom were artists. Albany and Gloucester marched on to Edinburgh; and the rebellion and the war with England were ended by Albany swearing to be a true and faithful subject, and Gloucester obtaining the strong post of Berwick, which ever after remained an English possession. In 1483 Louis of France broke off the contract which he had made with the king of England for the marriage of the dauphin and the lady Elizabeth. He saw a more advantageous union for his son in the daughter of Mary of Burgundy. Edward was furious, and immediately determined for war. But he who was "inclining to be fat" when Comines saw him at Picquigny, was now enfeebled in mind and body by long indulgence in every excess. His anger was expressed in paroxysms of rage without any determinate plans. A serious illness succeeded a slight ailment, and he died on the 9th of April, 1483, in the forty-second year of his age. He was buried in the new chapel of St. George at Windsor, to which the remains of Henry VI were afterwards removed.[b]

THE CHARACTER OF EDWARD IV

Edward is said to have been the most accomplished, and, till he grew too unwieldy, the handsomest man of the age. The love of pleasure was his ruling passion. Few princes have been more magnificent in their dress or more licentious in their amours; few have indulged more freely in the luxuries of the table. But such pursuits often interfered with his duties, and at last incapacitated him for active exertion. Even in youth, while he was fighting

for the throne, he was always the last to join his adherents; and in manhood, when he was firmly seated on it, he entirely abandoned the charge of military affairs to his brother Richard, duke of Gloucester. To the chief supporters of the opposite party he was cruel and unforgiving; the blood which he shed intimidated his friends no less than his foes: and both lords and commons during his reign, instead of contending, like their predecessors, for the establishment of rights and the abolition of grievances, made it their principal study to gratify the royal pleasure.

He was as suspicious as he was cruel. Every officer of government, every steward on his manors and farms, was employed as a spy on the conduct of all around him; they regularly made to the king reports of the state of the neighbourhood; and such was the fidelity of his memory that it was difficult to mention an individual of any consequence, even in the most distant counties, with whose character, history, and influence he was not accurately acquainted. Hence every project of opposition to his government was suppressed almost as soon as it was formed; and Edward might have promised himself a long and prosperous reign, had not continued indulgence enervated his constitution and sown the seeds of that malady which consigned him to the grave in the forty-first year of his age.[p]

The characterisation of Edward by Sir Thomas More which follows is interesting:

"Hee was goodly of Personage, and Princely to behold, of heart couragious, politicke in counsell, and in adversity nothing abashed, in prosperity rather joyfull then proud, in peace just and merciful, it was sharp and fierce, in the field bold and hardy, and yet neverthelesse no farther then reason and policie would adventure, whose warres whosoever circumspectly and advisedly considereth, hee shall no lesse commend his wisedome and policie where he avoided them, then his manhood where hee vanquished them. Hee was of vistage fullfaced and lovely, of body mighty, strong and clean made: with over-liberall and wanton dyet he waxed something corpulent and burly, but neverthelesse not uncomely. Hee was in youth greatly given to fleshly wantonnesse, from the which health of body in great prosperity and fortune, without an especiall grace hardly refraineth. This fault little grieved his people; for neither could any one man's pleasure stretch or extend to the displeasure of very many, nor a multitude bee grieved by a private man's fantasie or voluptuousnesse, when it was done without violence. And in his latter dayes hee left all wild dalliance, and fell to gravity, so that hee brought his Realme into a wealthy and prosperous estate, all feare of outward enemies were clearly extinguished, and no warre was in hand, nor none toward, but such as no man looked for. The people were toward their Prince not in a constrained feare, but in a true, loving, and wilfull obedience among themselves, and the Commons were in good peace. The Lords whom hee knew at variance, hee on his death bed (as hee thought) brought to good concord, love, and amity. And a little before his death, he had left gathering of money of his subjects, which is the onely thing that draweth the hearts of English men from their Kings and Princes: nor nothing hee enterprised nor tooke in hand, by the which hee should be driven thereunto."[o]

MIDDLEHAM CASTLE, WENSLEYDALE
(Residence of Warwick, the King-maker)

CHAPTER XVII

EDWARD V AND RICHARD III

[1483–1485 A.D.]

O, momentary grace of mortal men,
Which we more hunt for than the grace of God!
Who builds his hopes in air of your good looks,
Lives like a drunken sailor on a mast,
Ready, with every nod, to tumble down
Into the fatal bowels of the deep.
SHAKESPEARE (*Richard III:* Act iii.; Scene v.).

THE PROCLAMATION OF EDWARD V

A FAINT glimmering of light may be thrown on the dark transactions which followed the death of the late king by adverting to the state of parties at the close of his reign. Whether it were that Edward had been compelled by the importunities of his wife, or that he felt a pride in aggrandising the family of her whom he had placed by his side on the throne, he had successively raised her relations from the condition of knights and esquires to the highest honours and offices in the state. By the more ancient nobility their rapid elevation was viewed with jealousy and resentment; and their influence, though it appeared formidable while it was supported by the favour of the king, proved in the sequel to be very inconsiderable, and confined to the few families into which they had married.

The marquis of Dorset, the queen's son by a former marriage, and her brother, the accomplished but unfortunate Earl Rivers, possessed the first seats at the council board; but they were continually opposed by the lords Hastings, Howard, and Stanley, the king's personal friends, particularly the first, whom Edward had chosen for the companion of his pleasures, and who on that very account was the more odious to the queen. The monarch during his health had balanced by his prudence the rivalry and silenced by his authority the dissensions of the two parties; and on his death-bed, warned by the unfortunate minority of Henry VI, had called them into his chamber, exhorted them to mutual forgiveness, and commanded them to embrace in

his presence. They obeyed with apparent cheerfulness, but their hearts gave the lie to the sentiments which they uttered, and the lapse of a few days proved how treacherous were all such reconciliations, when he by whose order they had been made no longer lived to enforce them.[1]

As soon as the king had expired, the council assembled, and resolved to proclaim his eldest son by the style of Edward V. But here their unanimity ended. The young prince, accompanied by his uncle, Earl Rivers, and his uterine brother, Lord Grey, had been sent to Ludlow in Shropshire, under the pretext that his presence would serve to restrain the natives of Wales—but in reality that, by growing up under their tuition, he might become more attached to his maternal relatives. A suspicion was entertained that, in imitation of Isabella, the mother of Edward III, the queen would aspire to a considerable share of authority during the minority of her son; and to defeat her designs, the enemies of the Woodvilles anxiously expected the arrival of the duke of Gloucester, the king's uncle, and the duke of Buckingham, the lineal descendant of Thomas of Woodstock, the youngest son of Edward III. When Elizabeth proposed that Rivers and Grey should conduct Edward from Ludlow to the metropolis under the protection of an army, Hastings and his friends took the alarm.

EDWARD V
(1470–1483)

Gloucester and Buckingham were still absent; the Tower was in the possession of the marquis of Dorset; the king was surrounded by the queen's creatures; and the addition of an army would place her opponents at her mercy, and enable the Woodvilles to establish their authority. Where, they asked, was the necessity of an army? Who were the enemies against whom it was to be directed? Did the Woodvilles mean to break the reconciliation which they had sworn to observe? A long and angry altercation ensued; Hastings declared that he would quit the court and retire to his command at Calais; the queen thought it prudent to yield, and in an evil hour the resolution was taken that the retinue of the young king should not exceed two thousand horsemen.

Richard, duke of Gloucester, was a prince of insatiable ambition, who could conceal the most bloody projects under the mask of affection and loyalty.

[1] For our knowledge of the events of this period we are chiefly indebted to the continuator of the *History of Croyland*[m] and Sir Thomas More.[b] The first was a contemporary. His name is unknown, but it appears from his work that he was a doctor of canon law, sometimes a member of the council under Edward IV, and occasionally employed by him as envoy to foreign powers. He declares that he has written with truth and impartiality. Sir Thomas More was born in 1480. In 1513, when he was under-sheriff of London, he wrote his *History of Richard III*, according to Rastell, who printed it in 1557 from a copy in More's handwriting. But Mr. Ellis has observed that the writer speaks of Edward IV as if he had been present during the last sickness of that monarch, which could not be the case with More, only three years old; and he is therefore inclined to believe that More was only the copier of a manuscript delivered to him by someone else, probably Cardinal Morton.

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Having the command of the army against the Scots, he was employed in the marches at the time of his brother's death; but the moment he heard of that event, he repaired to York with a train of six hundred knights and esquires dressed in mourning, ordered the obsequies of the deceased king to be performed with royal magnificence in the cathedral, summoned the gentlemen of the county to swear allegiance to Edward V, and, to give them an example, was himself the first who took the oath. At the same time he despatched letters to profess his affection and loyalty to his nephew, to condole with Elizabeth on the loss of her consort, and to offer his friendship to the earl Rivers and the other lords of the queen's family. Having added to the number of his followers, he proceeded southward, avowedly for the purpose of assisting at the coronation, which had been fixed by the council for the 4th of May.

With the object of the secret messages which during this interval had passed between the duke and Buckingham and Hastings we are unacquainted; of their import we may form a probable conjecture from the events which immediately succeeded. The young Edward had reached Stony Stratford on his road to London on the same day on which his uncle arrived at Northampton, about ten miles behind him. The lords Rivers and Grey hastened to welcome Gloucester in the name of the king, and to submit to his approbation the orders which had been framed for the royal entry into the metropolis. They were received with distinction and invited to dine with the duke, who lavished on them marks of his esteem and friendship. In the evening came the duke of Buckingham with a suite of three hundred horsemen. After supper Rivers and Grey retired to their quarters, highly pleased with their reception; the two princes, left to themselves, arranged the plan of their proceedings for the next day.

ARREST OF THE KING'S UNCLES

In the morning it was discovered that every outlet from the town had been strongly guarded during the night, for the purpose, it was said, of preventing any person from paying his respects to the king before the arrival of his uncle. The circumstance awakened suspicion; but the four lords rode in company, and apparently in friendship, to the entrance of Stony Stratford, when Gloucester suddenly accused Rivers and Grey of having estranged from him the affection of his nephew. They denied the charge, but were immediately arrested and conducted into the rear. The two dukes proceeded to the house where the king resided, and approached him bending the knee, and professing their loyalty and attachment. But after this outward demonstration of respect, they apprehended Sir Thomas Vaughan and Sir Richard Hawse, his confidential servants, ordered the rest of his retinue to disperse, and forbade by proclamation any of them to return into the royal presence under the penalty of death. The prince, abandoned and alarmed, burst into tears; but Gloucester, on his knees, conjured him to dismiss his terrors, to rely on the affection of his uncle, and to believe that these precautions had been rendered necessary by the perfidy of the Woodvilles. He conducted Edward back to Northampton, and ordered the four prisoners to be conveyed under a strong guard to his castle of Pontefract.

The same evening this mysterious transaction was confidentially announced to the lord Hastings, and soon afterwards was communicated to the queen-mother, who, foreboding the ruin of her family, hastily retired with her second son, Richard, her five daughters, and the marquis of Dorset, into

the sanctuary at Westminster, and was there lodged in the abbot's apartments. That asylum had formerly been respected by her greatest enemy, the earl of Warwick; it would not, she trusted, be violated by a brother-in-law. The capital was instantly thrown into confusion. The citizens armed themselves; some repaired to Elizabeth in Westminster, others to the lord Hastings in London. That nobleman in general terms assured his friends, what he probably believed himself, that the two dukes were loyal subjects, but their real purpose was preserved an impenetrable secret; and the adherents of the queen, without a leader and without information, awaited the result in the most anxious uncertainty.

On the 4th of May, the day originally appointed for the coronation, Gloucester conducted his captive nephew into the metropolis. At Hornsey park they were met by the lord mayor and aldermen in scarlet, followed by five hundred citizens in violet. The young king wore a long mantle of blue velvet; his attendants were dressed in deep mourning; Gloucester rode before him with his head bare, and pointed him out to the acclamations of the citizens. He was lodged with all the honours of royalty in the palace of the bishop, and immediately received the fealty and homage of the prelates, lords, and commoners who were present. A great council had been summoned, and continued to sit during several days. On the motion of the duke of Buckingham the king was removed to the Tower; a distant day, the 22d of June, was fixed for the coronation; the seals were taken from the archbishop of York and given to the bishop of Lincoln; several officers of the crown were dismissed, to make room for the adherents of the ruling party; and Gloucester, who had been appointed protector, assumed the lofty style of "brother and uncle of kings, protectour and defensour, great chamberlayne, constable, and lord high admiral of England."

What may have been the original object of this prince can be matter for conjecture only. It is not often that the adventurer discerns at the outset the goal at which he ultimately arrives. The tide of events bears him forward, and past success urges him to still higher attempts. If the duke aspired to nothing more than the protectorate, his ambition was not to be blamed. It was a dignity which the precedents of the two last minorities seemed to have attached to the king's uncle. But it soon appeared that he could not stand so near to the throne without wishing to place himself on it, and that, when he had once taken his resolve, no consideration of blood, or justice, or humanity could divert him from his object. He proceeded, however, with that caution and dissimulation which marked his character; his designs were but gradually and partially unfolded; nor did he openly avow his pretension to the crown till he had removed the most trusty of the king's friends, and taken from the rest every hope of opposing him with success.

THE FALL OF HASTINGS

While orders were issued and preparations made for the expected coronation, Gloucester was busily employed in maturing his plans and despatching instructions to his adherents. The council met daily at the royal apartments in the Tower; the confidants of the protector, at Crosby place, in Bishopsgate street, his residence in London. These separate meetings did not escape the notice of Lord Stanley; but his suspicion was lulled by the assurance of Hastings that he had secured the services of a trusty agent, through whom he learned the most secret counsels of Gloucester.

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The sequel will make it probable that this trusty agent deceived and betrayed him. A summons was issued to forty-eight lords and gentlemen to attend and receive knighthood preparatory to the coronation of the young king, a measure devised as a blind by the protector; for, three days later, he despatched orders to his retainers in the north to hasten to London for his protection against the bloody designs of the queen and her kinsmen; and shortly afterwards entering the council chamber at the Tower, he stood at first in silence knitting his brows, and then in answer to a remark by Lord Hastings called him a traitor, and struck his fist upon the table. A voice at the door exclaimed "Treason!" and a body of ruffians bursting into the room arrested Hastings, Stanley, and the two prelates York and Ely. The three last were conveyed to separate cells; Hastings was told to prepare for immediate execution. It was in vain that he inquired the cause. The order of the protector would not admit of delay; the first priest who offered himself received his confession; and a piece of timber, which accidentally lay in the green at the door of the chapel, served for the block on which he was beheaded. A proclamation was issued the same afternoon announcing that Hastings and his friends had conspired to put to death the dukes of Gloucester and Buckingham, who had miraculously escaped the snare laid for their destruction.

On the same day (and the time should be noticed) Ratcliffe, one of the boldest partisans of the protector, at the head of a numerous body of armed men, entered the castle of Pontefract and made himself master of the lord Grey, Sir Thomas Vaughan, and Sir Richard Hawse. To the spectators it was announced that they had been guilty of treason; but no judicial forms were observed, and the heads of the victims were struck off in the presence of the multitude.[1] Two days afterwards a letter from the duke was delivered by Ratcliffe to the mayor and citizens of York, informing them of the traitorous designs imputed to Elizabeth and the Woodvilles; and four days later proclamations were issued in the northern counties, commanding all men "to rise, and come to London under the earl of Northumberland and the lord Neville, to assist in subduing, correcting, and punishing the quene, her blode, and other her adherents, who entended to murder and destroy the protectour and his cousyn the duc of Buckyngham, and the old royal blode of the realm."

With these proceedings in the north the inhabitants of London were yet unacquainted; but the murder of Hastings and the arrest of Stanley and the two prelates had freed Gloucester from all apprehensions on the part of those who were most attached to the family of the late king. Of the royal brothers the elder had been securely lodged in the Tower; the younger still remained in sanctuary under the eye of Elizabeth. Him also the protector resolved to have at his mercy, and before the terror created by the late execution could subside, he proceeded to Westminster in his barge, accompanied by several noblemen and prelates, and followed by a numerous body of armed men. There cannot be a doubt that he intended to employ force, if force should be found necessary; but he determined to try first the influence of persuasion, and ordered a deputation of lords, with the cardinal of Canterbury at their head, to enter and demand the young prince from his mother. The ingenious arguments which Sir Thomas More has attributed to the prelate and the affecting replies which he has put into the mouth of the queen are probably the

[1] More [b] asserts repeatedly that these murders occurred on the same day as that of Lord Hastings. This may be true of the others, but is not correct as to Lord Rivers, who was indeed put to death at Pontefract but a few days later, and by command of the earl of Northumberland.

composition of the writer; a better authority assures us that Elizabeth, convinced of the inutility of resistance, affected to acquiesce with cheerfulness in the demand. She called for her boy, gave him a last and hasty embrace, and turning her back burst into tears. The innocent victim was conducted with great pomp to the Tower; and while the mother abandoned herself to the prophetic misgivings of her heart, her sons made themselves happy in the company of each other, little suspecting the wiles and cruelty of their unnatural uncle.

RICHARD'S PREPARATIONS FOR USURPING THE THRONE

The partisans of the protector were now employed in circulating the most strange and incredible rumours. Some revived the tale originally invented by Clarence, that the late king, though the reputed son of the duke of York, was in reality the fruit of an adulterous intercourse between his mother, Cecily, and a knight in the service of her husband. Others, and in greater numbers, affected to throw doubts on the validity of his marriage with Elizabeth, and consequently on the legitimacy of his children by that lady. To aid these impressions, the protector appeared in a new character, that of the patron and avenger of public morals. Among the married women who were known to have yielded to the desires of Edward was Jane, the wife of Shore, a young and opulent citizen. From the moment that her seduction became public she had been abandoned by her husband, and notwithstanding the inconstancy of her lover, she had contrived to retain the principal place in the king's affections till the time of his death. This woman, whose husband was now dead, Richard singled out for punishment. Her plate and jewels, to the value of 3,000 marks, he very wisely appropriated to himself; her person he delivered over to the ecclesiastical court to be punished according to the canons. In her kirtle, with her feet bare, carrying a lighted taper in her hand, and preceded by an officer bearing the cross, Shore was compelled to walk through the streets of the capital lined with an immense concourse of people.[1] That her penance could not affect the title of Edward's children is evident; but it served to direct the attention of the public to the dissolute conduct of that monarch, and to prepare men for the marvellous scene which was soon to be exhibited.

By this time the retainers of the late Lord Hastings, and a numerous body of Welshmen, had joined the duke of Buckingham; and the ruffians who had murdered the prisoners at Pontefract had reached the neighbourhood of London with a force of Yorkshiremen. It was believed that, in the course of the week, the protector and the duke would have twenty thousand armed men under their command in the metropolis. In these circumstances no danger could be apprehended from the public exposure of Gloucester's object. On the next Sunday, therefore, he appointed Doctor Shaw, the brother of the lord mayor, to preach at St. Paul's Cross, who selected for his text the following passage of the *Book of Wisdom:* "Bastard slips shall not strike deep roots." Having maintained from different examples that children were seldom permitted to enjoy the fruit of their father's iniquity, he proceeded to describe the well-known libertinism of the late king, who, he averred, had

[1] More [b] gives her in one respect a commendable character: "Many the king had, but her he loved, whose favour, to say the truth (for sin it were to belie the devil), she never abused to any man's hurt, but to many a man's comfort and relief; and now she beggeth of many at this day living, that at this day had begged if she had not been."

THE QUEEN RESIGNING THE DUKE OF YORK, BROTHER OF EDWARD V

(From the engraving by J. Fittler of the painting by J. Opie, R.A.)

[1483 A.D.]

been in the habit of promising marriage to every woman whom he found it difficult to seduce. Thus, in the beginning of his reign, to gratify his passion, he had not hesitated to contract marriage in private with Eleanor, the widow of the lord Boteler of Sudely;[1] and afterwards had married in the same clandestine manner Elizabeth, the widow of Sir John Grey. At a subsequent period he had thought proper to acknowledge the second contract; but such acknowledgment could not annul the prior right of Eleanor, who in the eyes of God and man was the true wife of the king.

Hence the preacher concluded that Elizabeth, though admitted as queen of England, could be considered in no other light than a concubine, and that her children by Edward had no legitimate claim to the succession of their father. Indeed, he entertained a doubt whether that prince were in reality the son of Richard, duke of York, and real heir to the crown. All who had been acquainted with the duke must know that there existed no resemblance between him and Edward. "But," he exclaimed (and at the very moment the protector, as if by accident passing through the crowd, showed himself from a balcony near the pulpit), "here, in the duke of Gloucester, we have the very picture of that hero; here every lineament reflects the features of the father." It had been expected that at these words the citizens would exclaim, "Long live King Richard!" but they gazed on each other in silent astonishment: the protector put on an air of displeasure; and the preacher, having hastily concluded his sermon, slunk away to his home. It is said that he never afterwards ventured beyond his own door, but pined away through shame and remorse.[2]

COSTUME, TIME OF RICHARD III

Richard, however, was not disheartened by the failure of this attempt, but intrusted his cause to the eloquence of a more noble advocate. On the next Tuesday the duke of Buckingham, attended by several lords and gentlemen, harangued the citizens from the hustings at Guildhall. He reminded them of Edward's tyranny, of the sums which he had extorted under the name of benevolence, and of the families which he had rendered unhappy by his amours. He then took occasion to allude to the sermon which they had heard on the last Sunday, the story of the king's pre-contract with the lady Boteler, his subsequent union with the lady Grey, and the illegitimacy of the children, the

[1] In Sir Thomas More,[b] Elizabeth Lucy is substituted for Lady Boteler. It is probably an accidental mistake, as both are said to have been Edward's mistresses.

[2] This sermon is rejected by Walpole[n] in his *Historic Doubts*. That several of the speeches recorded by Sir Thomas More[b] are mere rhetorical exercises is indeed probable; but it is equally probable that in mentioning this public and celebrated sermon, which was still in the recollec-

fruit of that pretended marriage. He added that evidently the right to the crown was in Richard, duke of Gloucester, the only true issue of the duke of York, and that the lords and commons of the northern counties had sworn never to submit to the rule of a bastard. Contrary to his expectations, the citizens were still silent: he at length required an answer, whether it were in favour of the protector or not; and a few persons, hired for the purpose, and stationed at the bottom of the hall, having thrown up their bonnets, and exclaimed "King Richard!" the duke gave the assembly his thanks for their assent, and invited them to accompany him the next day to Baynard's castle, which was at that time the residence of the duke of Gloucester.

THE PETITION TO THE PROTECTOR

In the morning Buckingham, with many lords and gentlemen, and Shaw, the lord mayor, with the principal citizens, proceeded to the palace and demanded an audience.[1] The protector affected to be surprised at their arrival; expressed apprehensions for his safety; and when at last he showed himself at a window, appeared before them with strong marks of embarrassment and perturbation. Buckingham, with his permission, presented to him an address, which, having been afterwards embodied in an act of parliament, still exists for the information of posterity. It is styled the consideration, election, and petition of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons of this realm of England; and after an exaggerated picture of the former prosperity of the kingdom, and of its misery under the late king, proceeds thus:

"Also we consider how the pretensed marriage betwixt the above-named King Edward and Elizabeth Grey was made of great presumption, without the knowing and assent of the lords of this land, and also by sorcery and witchcraft committed by the said Elizabeth and her mother Jacquetta, duchess of Bedford, as the common opinion of the people, and the public voice and fame is throughout all this land, and hereafter, and as the case shall require, shall be proved sufficiently in time and place convenient; and here also we consider how that the said pretensed marriage was made privily and secretly, without edition of banns, in a private chamber, a profane place, and not openly in the face of the church, after the law of God's church, but contrary thereunto, and the laudable custom of the church of England; and how also that at the time of the contract of the said pretensed marriage, and before and long after, the said King Edward was and stood married and troth-plight to one Dame Eleanor Butteler, daughter of the old earl of Shrewsbury, with whom the said King Edward had made a pre-contract of matrimony long time before he made the said pretensed marriage with the said Elizabeth Grey, in manner and form aforesaid; which premises being true, as in very truth they

tion of many of his readers, he would preserve at least its substance. The principal part of his narrative is moreover corroborated by the testimony of Fabyan,[k] who was probably present. To the objection that the protector lived in habits of friendship with his mother, and therefore would not allow her character to be aspersed, it may be replied that there is no satisfactory proof of that friendship, and that the man who could shed the blood of two nephews to procure the crown would not refuse to allow the character of his mother to be slandered for the same purpose.

[1] A parliament had been summoned for this very day, and Buckingham would take advantage of the arrival of the members to induce many of them to accompany him. But there is no reason to believe that any parliament was regularly held, though there exists a copy of a speech with which the bishop of Lincoln, the chancellor, is supposed to have opened it. The chancellor, unaware of the revolution which was about to take place, had prepared his speech, which, though never spoken, has accidentally been preserved.

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be true, it appeareth and followeth evidently that the said King Edward, during his life, and the said Elizabeth, lived together sinfully and damnably in adultery against the law of God and of his church. Also it appeareth evidently, and followeth, that all the issue and children of the said King Edward be bastards, and unable to inherit or to claim anything by inheritance by the law and custom of England."

Next is recited the attainder of the duke of Clarence, by which his children were debarred from the succession; and thence it is inferred that the protector is the next heir to Richard, late duke of York. "And hereupon," continues the petition, "we humbly desire, pray, and require your noble grace, that according to this election of us, the three estates of your land, as by your true inheritance, you will accept and take upon you the said crown and royal dignity, with all things thereunto annexed and appertaining, as to you of right belonging, as well by inheritance as by lawful election."[1]

The protector was careful not to dispute the truth of these assertions. But he replied with modesty that he was not ambitious; that royalty had no charms for him; that he was much attached to the children of his brother, and would preserve the crown to grace the brows of his nephew. "Sir," returned the duke of Buckingham, "the free people of England will never crouch to the rule of a bastard, and if the lawful heir refuse the sceptre, we know where to find one who will cheerfully accept it." At these words Richard affected to pause; and after a short silence replied that it was his duty to obey the voice of his people; that since he was the true heir and had been chosen by the three estates, he assented to their petition, and would from that day take upon himself the royal estate, pre-eminence, and the kingdom of the two noble realms of England and France; the one from that day forward by him and his heirs to rule, the other by God's grace and their good help to get again and subdue.

Thus ended this hypocritical farce. The next day Richard proceeded to Westminster in state and took possession of his pretended inheritance, by placing himself on the marble seat in the great hall, with the lord Howard, afterwards duke of Norfolk, on his right hand, and the duke of Suffolk on his left. To those present he stated that he had chosen to commence his reign in that place because the administration of justice was the first duty of a king; and ordered proclamation to be made that he forgave all offences which had been committed against him before that hour. From Westminster he went to St. Paul's, where he was received by the clergy in procession, and welcomed with the acclamations of the people. From that day, the 26th of June, 1483, he dated the commencement of his reign.[c]

THE ACCESSION OF RICHARD III

As far as we can discover, however, the accession of the duke of Gloucester to the crown was not an unsanctioned usurpation, resting only upon the resolute will of one man, surrounded by a few unscrupulous partisans, and having the command of a strong military force. Hastings, Rivers, Vaughan, Grey,

[1] But was there ever any such person as Dame Eleanor Butteler, daughter of the old earl of Shrewsbury? We know so little about her that her existence has been called in question. There is, however, in the possession of Lord Shrewsbury an illuminated pedigree by Glover in 1580, in which she is named as the first-born of the second marriage of the first earl (with a daughter of Beauchamp, earl of Warwick), and as wife of Sir Thomas Butler, Lord Sudeley. If this be correct, there must have been the disparity of at least fifteen years, probably of more, between her age and that of Edward.

Hawse had been swept away by sudden tyranny. The heir of the last king, to whom the nobles of the land had twice sworn fealty, was, with his brother, in mysterious confinement; which, according to the natural destiny of deposed princes, would probably end in secret murder. And yet, in less than a fortnight after Richard had seated himself on the marble bench of Westminster Hall, thirty-five of the peers of England and seventy of her knights—names amongst the highest in the land—did homage at his coronation. There is nothing to indicate that the usurper had an insecure seat—that the violence which these great men had witnessed, or thoroughly known, was far out of the ordinary course of events. Theirs had been a long training in the outrage and dissimulation of a disputed succession; and if their moral sense was not so completely blunted as that of the chief perpetrator of the revolution of 1483, their prostration before the despot of the hour was so absolute as to throw a colour of legality over all his proceedings.

Nor is it to be affirmed that no principle of public policy was mingled with their ready submission to his will. They had a natural dread of the insecurity of minorities and protectors, and of struggles for power amongst unprincipled favourites. They were familiar with depositions and "sad stories of the death of kings." These were the invariable accompaniments of the inordinate power of a turbulent aristocracy; and when Buckingham, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Northumberland—the highest of the nobles—were ranged on the side of Richard, the herd of lesser lords of the soil did not trouble their consciences with thoughts of the probable fate of the children of their late master. One had leapt into the throne whom they knew for a man of courage and sagacity, as ready to defend his own interests as to uphold those who served him and depress those who were open enemies or cold friends. During the next half century of our history we shall see how much more completely even than in the case of Richard the directing minds of the country were subjected to the absolute will of the monarch; and, therefore, how imperfect is the evidence furnished by proclamations of council, and statutes of parliament, and verdicts of peers, of a regard for the public welfare overriding the baser influences of selfishness and cowardice, to sanctify, as some would believe, the caprice, injustice, and cruelty of regal pride and passion.

The character of Richard was an extraordinary mixture of hateful and amiable qualities, of either of which we must not attempt altogether to judge by the opinions of our own times. Those who had served him he loaded with benefits. Foremost amongst these was the duke of Buckingham, to whom by letters patent, dated a week after the coronation, he assigned the estates which Buckingham derived in right of his descent from Humphrey de Bohun, earl of Hereford, which had been withheld from him by Edward IV. Nor had Richard any petty feelings of revenge towards the representatives of those whom his policy had cast down. About the same time he released the estates of Hastings from forfeiture, in favour of his widow and her children. He secured her jointure to the widow of Rivers, and bestowed a pension on Lady Oxford, whose husband was in prison. He moved about amongst the people as though he had no sense of having committed wrongs which would make him obnoxious, going a progress to Reading, Oxford, Gloucester, Tewkesbury, Worcester, Warwick, Coventry, Leicester, Nottingham, York. At the great city of the north, York, Richard and his queen [Anne, daughter of the "King-maker," Warwick] were again crowned in the minster. During the progress he administered justice against offenders and "heard the complaints of poor folks." All seemed to promise a reign of peace and security, however troubled its beginnings.[d]

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BUCKINGHAM'S REVOLT; THE MURDER OF THE PRINCES

Whilst Richard was thus spending his time in apparent security at York, he was apprised of the tempest which had been gathering behind him. The terror of his presence had before silenced the suspicions of the public; but he was no sooner gone than men freely communicated their thoughts to each other, commiserated the lot of the young Edward and his brother in the Tower, and openly condemned the usurpation of the crown by their unnatural uncle. Different plans were suggested. Some proposed to liberate the two princes from their confinement; others preferred the less dangerous measure of conveying one or more of their sisters beyond sea, that, whatever might be the subsequent policy of Richard, the posterity of his brother might survive to claim, perhaps to recover, the crown. But the king, though it was unknown, had already guarded against the first of these projects by the murder of his nephews; and to prevent the second, he had ordered John Nesfield to surround the sanctuary of Westminster with a body of armed men, and to refuse ingress or egress to any person without a special license.

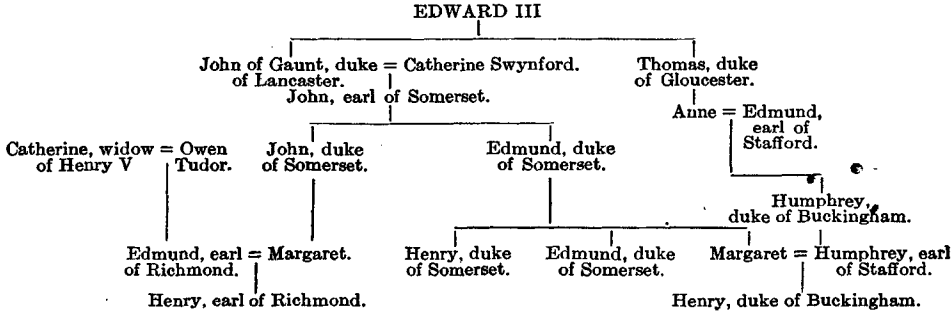
RICHARD III

Meanwhile the friends of the princes steadily pursued their object. In Kent, Essex, and Sussex, in Berkshire, Hants, Wilts, and Devonshire, meetings were privately held; a resolution was taken to appeal to arms, and the hopes of the confederates were raised by the unexpected accession of a most powerful ally. What, in the course of a few weeks, could have changed the duke of Buckingham from a zealous friend into a determined enemy to the new king it is in vain to conjecture. If his services to Richard had been great, they had been amply rewarded. He had been made constable of England, justiciary of Wales, governor of the royal castles in that principality, and steward of the king's manors in Hereford and Shropshire; and in addition had obtained the opulent inheritance of Humphrey de Bohun, which the late monarch had unjustly annexed to his own demesnes. Perhaps his knowledge of the cruel and suspicious character of the usurper had taught him to fear that he himself, to whom the Lancastrians looked up for protection, might be the next victim; perhaps, as has been said, his opinions were changed by the artful and eloquent observations of his prisoner Morton. However that may be, Buckingham, whose wife was the sister of Elizabeth, engaged to restore the crown to the young prince, whom he had contributed to dethrone; and his resolution to put himself at the head of the party was communicated in circular letters to the principal of the confederates. At that very moment, when their hearts beat with the confidence of success, their hopes were suddenly dashed to the ground by the mournful intelligence that the two princes for whom they intended to fight were no longer alive.

On what day or in what manner they perished was kept a profound secret; the following is the most consistent and probable account, collected from the confession made by the murderers in the next reign. Soon after his departure from London Richard had tampered in vain with Brackenbury, the governor of the Tower. From Warwick he despatched Sir James Tyrrel, his master of the horse, with orders that he should receive the keys and the command of the fortress during twenty-four hours. In the night Tyrrel, accompanied by Forest, a known assassin, and Dighton, one of his grooms, ascended the staircase leading to the chamber in which the two princes lay asleep. While Tyrrel watched without, Forest and Dighton entered the room, smothered their victims with the bed-clothes, called in their employer to view the dead bodies, and by his orders buried them at the foot of the staircase. In the morning Tyrrel restored the keys to Brackenbury, and rejoined the king before his coronation at York. Aware of the execration to which the knowledge of this black deed must expose him, Richard was anxious that it should not transpire; but when he understood that men had taken up arms to liberate the two princes, he suffered the intelligence of their death to be published, that he might disconcert the plans and awaken the fears of his enemies.

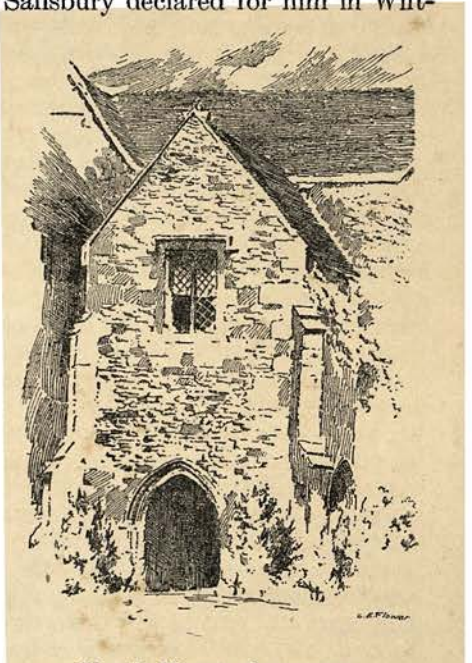
The intelligence was received with horror both by the friends and the foes of the usurper; but, if it changed the object, it did not dissolve the union of the conspirators. They could not retrace their steps with security; and since the princes for whom they had intended to fight were no longer alive, it became necessary to set up a new competitor in opposition to Richard. The bishop of Ely proposed that the crown should be offered to Henry, the young earl of Richmond, the representative, in right of his mother, of the house of Lancaster,[1] but on the condition that he should marry the princess Elizabeth, to whom the claim of the house of York had now devolved—a marriage which, the prelate observed, would unite the partisans of the two families in one common cause, enable them to triumph over the murderer, and put an end to those dissensions which had so long convulsed and depopulated the nation. The suggestion was approved by the queen-dowager, the duke of Buckingham, the marquis of Dorset, and most of their friends: the countess of Richmond consented in the name of her son; and a messenger was despatched to Brittany to inform the earl of the agreement, to hasten his return to England, and to announce the 18th of October as the day fixed for the general rising in his favour.

[1] If Margaret, countess of Richmond, was the great-granddaughter of John of Gaunt, so was Margaret, countess of Stafford, the mother of Buckingham; but as the father of the former was an elder brother, she was deemed the head of the house of Lancaster, and had married Edmund, earl of Richmond, the son of Queen Catherine by Owen Tudor—Buckingham was descended also from Thomas, duke of Gloucester, sixth son of Edward III. These particulars will be plain from the following table:


EDWARD III
John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster. = Catherine Swynford.
John, earl of Somerset.
Thomas, duke of Gloucester.
Anne = Edmund, earl of Stafford.
Catherine, widow of Henry V = Owen Tudor.
John, duke of Somerset.
Edmund, duke of Somerset.
Humphrey, duke of Buckingham.
Edmund, earl of Richmond. = Margaret.
Henry, duke of Somerset.
Edmund, duke of Somerset.
Margaret = Humphrey, earl of Stafford.
Henry, earl of Richmond.
Henry, duke of Buckingham.

THE SUPPRESSION OF THE REVOLT

The new plan of the confederates escaped the vigilance of the king, who, ignorant of his danger, proceeded from York into Lincolnshire; but in a fortnight the answer of Henry was received, and was no sooner communicated to his friends than it reached the ears of Richard. To prepare for the contest, he summoned all his adherents to meet him with their retainers at Leicester, proclaimed Buckingham a traitor, and sent for the great seal from London. On the appointed day the rising took place. The marquis of Dorset proclaimed Henry at Exeter; the bishop of Salisbury declared for him in Wiltshire; the gentlemen in Kent met for the same purpose at Maidstone; those of Berkshire at Newbury; and the duke of Buckingham unfurled his standard at Brecon.



KING'S HOUSE, SALISBURY
(Erected latter end of fourteenth century)

Five days later Richard joined his army at Leicester, where he issued a most singular proclamation. He begins by boasting of his zeal for morality and the administration of justice; then calls his enemies "traitors, adulterers, and bawds"; asserts that their object is not only the destruction of the throne, but "the letting of virtue, and the damnable maintenance of vice"; grants a free pardon to all yeomen and commoners who have been deluded by the false pretensions of the rebels; threatens with the punishment of treason all who shall hereafter lend them assistance; and promises rewards for the apprehension of Buckingham and his associates. But Richard's good fortune served him better than his troops or his proclamations. Had Henry landed, or had the duke been able to join the other insurgents, the reign of the usurper would probably have been terminated. But though Henry had sailed from St. Malo with a fleet of forty sail, the weather was so tempestuous that but few could follow him across the Channel; and when he reached the coast of Devon the insufficiency of his force forbade him to disembark.

Buckingham was still more unfortunate. From Brecon he had marched through the forest of Dean to the Severn; but the bridges were broken down, and the river was so swollen that the fords had become impassable. He turned back to Weobley, the seat of the lord Ferrers; but the Welshmen who had followed him disbanded, and the news of their desertion induced the other bodies of insurgents to provide for their own safety. Thus the king triumphed without drawing the sword. Weobley was narrowly watched on the one side by Sir Humphrey Stafford, on the other by the clan of the Vaughans, who for their reward had received a promise of the plunder of Brecon. Morton effected his escape in disguise to the isle of Ely, and thence passed to the coast of Flanders; the duke in a similar dress reached the hut of Banaster, one of

his servants in Shropshire, where he was betrayed by the perfidy of his host. If he hoped for pardon on the merit of his former services, he had mistaken the character of Richard. That prince had already reached Salisbury with his army; he refused to see the prisoner, and ordered his head to be immediately struck off in the market-place. From Salisbury he marched into Devonshire. The insurgents dispersed; the marquis of Dorset, and Courtenay, bishop of Exeter, crossed the Channel to the coast of Brittany; and others found an asylum in the fidelity of their neighbours and the respect which was still paid to the sanctuaries. Of the prisoners, St. Leger, a knight, had married the duchess of Exeter, the sister of Richard. But it was in vain that the plea of affinity was urged in his favour, and a large sum of money offered for his ransom. By the king's order he suffered with others at Exeter.[c]

LEGISLATION OF RICHARD'S REIGN

In this abortive revolt against the power of Richard we see nothing like a popular movement on one side or the other. The faithful adherents of the king, such as the duke of Norfolk, gathered their "tall fellows in harness," and stood by the man whom they had placed on the throne. Buckingham impressed his Welshmen, and a few lords and knights prepared their tenants for the field. But there was no signal demonstration in London or the great cities. The peaceful and industrious people of town and country were utterly weary of these feudal struggles, and had sunk into the worst state of public feeling—that of indifference. Richard and his advisers appear to have partially comprehended the spirit of their time, and to have endeavoured to discharge their duty to the people by wise legislation and impartial justice. Bacon[e] says of this king that he was "jealous of the honour of the English nation, and likewise a good law-maker, for the ease and solace of the common people." At the same time Bacon objects that "the politic and wholesome laws which were enacted in his time" were only "to woo and win the hearts of the people, as being conscious to himself that the true obligations of sovereignty in him failed and were wanting." Bacon lived at a period when "the ease and solace of the common people," to be promoted by wholesome laws, were scarcely thought to be amongst "the true obligations of sovereignty." The maligned Richard, in the statutes of his one parliament, showed that he was in advance of his age.

The triumph of the king, in the failure of the plans of Buckingham and Richmond, would naturally tend to place his government upon a more secure basis. He found a parliament ready enough to confirm his title, by passing an act for the settlement of the crown upon him and his issue, in which the illegitimacy of the children of Edward IV was affirmed, and his widow was styled "sometime wife to Sir John Grey, knight, late naming herself and many years heretofore queen of England." But this parliament, which was held at Westminster on the 23d of January, 1484, did something beyond this confirmation of Richard's claims, and the attainder of those who had been concerned in the recent revolt. In the address which the protector delivered to the meeting which invited him to assume the crown, he used these remarkable words: "For certainly we be determined rather to aventure and commit us to the peril of our life and jeopardy of death, than to live in such thraldom and bondage as we have lived long time heretofore, oppressed and injured by extortions and new impositions against the laws of God and man, and the liberty, old policy, and laws of this realm, wherein every Englishman is

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inherited." This was not a mere boast of the hour. Edward IV had been accustomed to plunder his subjects under the name of "benevolences"; which practice the duke of Buckingham defined to be "that every man should pay, not what he of his own good will list, but what the king of his own good will list to take." The statute of Richard "to free the subject from benevolences" denounces these "new and unlawful inventions" as the cause of "great penury and wretchedness," and ordains that no such exactions shall in future be made, but that they be "annulled forever."

The Act for Bailing of Persons suspected of Felony provides that on arrests for mere suspicion of felony, every justice of the peace shall have power to bail; and that the goods of persons apprehended for felony shall not be seized before conviction. An Act for Returning of sufficient Jurors aims at the proper administration of justice, by requiring that no jurymen be summoned but such as are of good name and fame, and have twenty shillings a year in freehold land, or twenty-six shillings and eightpence in copyhold. An Act against privy and unknown Feofments secures the transfer of property to the buyer against the claims of the heirs of the seller. An Act for Proclamation upon Fines levied is repeated in almost the exact words by a statute of Henry VII. "It is surely strange," says Hallam,[f] "that those who have extolled this sagacious monarch (Henry VII) for breaking the fetters of landed property (though many of them were lawyers) should never have observed that whatever credit might be due for the innovation should redound to the honour of the unfortunate usurper." It is unnecessary here to enter upon a technical explanation of the provisions of this act. By a decision of the courts of law in the time of Edward IV, the practice of barring estates tail—that is, of permitting their alienation in despite of entail—by what is called a common recovery, was established. The statute of Richard, by enacting that a fine levied in the courts, with due proclamation, should, after five years, be a bar to all claims, gave security to possession, and thus facilitated the transfer of lands, and in so doing broke down one of the chief foundations of the feudal system.

Lord Campbell,[g] looking at these acts of Richard III—fifteen altogether—says of this, his only parliament: "We have no difficulty in pronouncing it the most meritorious national council for protecting the liberty of the subject, and putting down abuses in the administration of justice, which had sat since the time of Edward I." But in opening the volumes of laws, as printed by authority "from original records and authentic manuscripts," we are struck with a change upon the face of these statutes of Richard III, which indicates as true a regard for the liberty of the subject as the laws themselves. For the first time the laws to be obeyed by the English people are enacted in the English tongue. But, beyond this, they are the first laws of the land which were ever printed. In the legislation of this short and troubled reign, and in the mode of promulgating a knowledge of the laws, there is the evidence of some master mind breaking down the trammels of routine and prescription.

The commercial acts are not marked by any advance beyond the principle of protection, except in one striking instance, in which an exception is made to the old system of fettering the dealings and restricting the liberty of alien traders. There was one commodity which was to come into the land as freely as the light from heaven; there was one class of foreign merchants whose calling was to be encouraged, for in their hands were the great instruments of all national progress. Let us give this memorable enactment in its original English: "Provided alwey that this acte, or any part therof, or any other acte made or to be made in this present parliament, in no wise extende or be

prejudiciall any lette hurte or impediment to any artificer or merchaunt straungier of what nacion or contrey he be or shalbe of, for bryngyng into this realme, or sellyng by retaill or otherwise, of any maner bokes wrytten or imprynted, or for the inhabitynge within the said realme for the same intent, or to any writer, lympner, bynder, or imprynter, of suche bokes, as he hath or shall have to sell by wey of merchaundise, or for their abode in the same realme for the exercisyng of the said occupacions; this acte or any parte therof notwithstandyng." There could be no greater homage to the memory of Gutenberg, the inventor of printing, than this law, enacted fifteen years after his death, which said to his fellow craftsmen of every nation that no English restrictions upon aliens should touch them. The power, now for the first time exercised, of securing a better obedience to the laws by a wider publicity, demanded such a tribute to the merchants and artificers of knowledge. Richard and his counsellors stood upon the threshold of a new state of society; and this encouragement of transcribers, printers, and sellers of books showed that they understood what was one of the characteristics of their time. But the spirit of the feudal ages was still a living presence. As the commercial classes were pressing forward to the honours which wealth commanded, and the gates of knowledge were opened wider, the claims of blood came to be regarded even more than when the only social distinction was that of lord and vassal. The knight-riders, poursuivants, heralds of kings were more than ever required to be the arbiters of rank and the tracers of genealogies. Richard III raised the heralds into an incorporation, and bestowed upon them the royal house of Cold Harbour. They became the worthy depositaries of the nation's family antiquities.

RICHARD AND PRINCESS ELIZABETH

One of the measures of Richard's parliament was to annul all letters-patent granting estates to "Elizabeth, late wife of Sir John Grey." The relict of Edward IV still remained with her daughters in sanctuary. But on the 1st of March, 1484, the king, in the presence of lords spiritual and temporal, and the mayor and aldermen of London, made oath *verbo regio* upon the holy evangelists that if Elizabeth, Cecily, Anne, Catherine, and Bridget, the daughters of Dame Elizabeth Grey, would come out of the sanctuary, and be guided, ruled, and demeaned after him, he would see that they should be in surety of their lives and suffer no hurt or imprisonment, but that they should have everything necessary as his kinswomen; and that he would endow such as were marriageable with lands to the yearly value of 200 marks, and provide them gentlemen-born as husbands; and that their mother should receive of him 700 marks annually for her support. This family accordingly came out of their place of refuge, and submitted themselves to the guidance of Richard.

In the next month he, who was suspected of having destroyed his brother's sons, himself sustained the heaviest of human afflictions. His own son, Edward, the only child of his marriage with the daughter of Warwick, died at Middleham castle. The unhappy parents were driven almost mad by the intelligence. But the king had too many enemies to watch to sit down in hopeless grief. He declared his nephew, John de la Pole, earl of Lincoln, his heir, and applied himself to counteract the schemes of Richmond, by negotiating with the duke of Brittany to deliver him up. But Richmond was in many respects his intellectual equal; and he had secret friends in the English

court, as useful as the spies whom Richard employed to watch the motions of his rival. He suddenly fled from Vannes with a few servants, and succeeded in entering France, where he claimed the protection of Charles VIII. The earl of Oxford, one of the most constant of the Lancastrians, escaped from his prison at Ham and joined Richmond, to whom other adherents gradually flocked.

The king spent the year in active preparation for the possible invasion. He kept his Christmas at Westminster with great splendour; and it was remarked that his niece Elizabeth was dressed in robes of the same fashion and colour as those of his queen. Scandal upon this hint took up its courtly vocation, and the rumour went that, as the queen was in ill health, he contemplated marriage with his niece. On the 16th of March, 1485, the queen died. Here was a new occasion for fastening one more horrible suspicion upon the evil reputation of Richard; and therefore Polydore Vergil[i] makes a doubt "whether she were despatched by sorrowfulness or poison." [1] A eulogist of Richard, Sir George Buck,[j] affirms that he had seen a letter written to the duke of Norfolk by Elizabeth of York, in which she called the king "her joy and maker in this world, and said that she was his in heart and thought; withal insinuating that the better part of February was past, and that she feared the queen would never die." Although such a marriage was not beyond the bounds of papal dispensation, Richard felt that the rumour was injurious to him. Within a month after the death of the queen, on the 11th of April, before the mayor and citizens of London he solemnly disavowed the intention which had been imputed to him. It has been justly observed by Sir N. H. Nicolas[h] that his title to the crown would not have been strengthened by marrying a woman whom the law had declared illegitimate; and as justly inferred that "the whole tale was invented with the view of blackening Richard's character, to gratify the monarch in whose reign all the contemporary writers who relate it flourished." But they told the story, as against Richard, without the slightest hint that the lady who became the wife of Henry VII was enamoured of the man who was held to be the destroyer of her brothers; but on the contrary they said that she abhorred his proposals. After the death of Richard's queen, Elizabeth was removed to Sheriff Hutton castle, where her cousin, the earl of Warwick, the son of the duke of Clarence, was kept in a sort of honourable captivity. Historians, who can scarcely avoid dwelling too much upon the intrigues of courts, are indignant with the widow of Edward IV that at this time she was in friendly relations with Richard, and induced her son, the marquis of Dorset, to attempt to return to England. He was detained by the king of France, who gave assistance to the project of Richmond; and the preparations for invasion went forward.

Richard appears to have somewhat too much despised his adversary. He was in London from the beginning of the year till the middle of May. There had been no parliament to grant him a subsidy, and he, by a solemn legislative act, had declared against "benevolences." He was too straitened for money to make large warlike preparations. Fabyan,[k] who personally knew whatever actions of the king bore upon the pockets of the citizens, says of this period that "King Richard spared not to spend the great treasure which, before, King Edward IV had gathered, in giving of great and large gifts"; and that "he borrowed many notable sums of money of rich men of this realm, and

[1 Lingard [c] says: "From the expressions in Elizabeth's letter there is reason to fear that this suspicion was too true. It is evident Richard had not only promised to marry her, but had told her that the queen would die in February. Hence she observes that the better part of February is past, and the queen still alive."]

specially of the citizens of London, whereof the least sum was forty pounds. For surety whereof he delivered to them good and sufficient pledges." This is explicit enough; and yet we constantly find it stated that Richard lost his small share of the affections of the citizens by adopting the system of benevolences [which he had expressly revoked], though not in name.[1] He who gives "good and sufficient pledges" for a loan can scarcely be said to pursue the same system of extortion as he who compels a gift without an intention of repayment.

HENRY OF RICHMOND

The earl of Richmond had been acquainted with misfortune from his first years. Comines [l] says, "He told me, not long before his departure from this kingdom, that from the time he was five years old he had always been a fugitive or a prisoner." According to outward appearances and ordinary calculations, his enterprise for the English crown was not likely to improve his lot. The same observer regarded Richmond as without money, without power, without reputation, and without right; and he describes the three thousand Normans that were furnished to the earl by the king of France as "the loosest and most profligate persons in all that country."

But Richmond had better support than his outward power of three thousand vagabond Normans. There was a systematic organisation of the Lancastrian party in England, which Richard, with all his penetration and caution, and with his reputation for striking hard when he did strike, very insufficiently guarded against. He had no great military force at his command. Fourteen years had passed since the battle of Tewkesbury, when the people of the south had rallied round the banner of the White Rose. The Welsh had followed Buckingham, and were now ready to follow Richmond, who came with a genealogy from Cadwallon and King Arthur up to the Trojan Brutus. Stanley, who could command many followers in Cheshire and Lancashire, and Northumberland, the great lord of the border country, were nominally for the king, and employed their authority as his accredited officers. The day of battle showed how dexterously they had been won over to betray him. The confidence of Richard in the fidelity of these nobles seems a judicial blindness, very different from the supposed temper of the man who, according to Polydore Vergil,[i] "while he was thinking of any matter, did continually bite his nether lip, as though that cruel nature of his did so rage against itself in that little carcase." He indeed took some security in detaining the son of Lord Stanley at his court while the father went amongst his tenantry; but, beyond this, he seems to have had no suspicion of treachery.[d]

At length the king was informed by his emissaries that the earl of Richmond, with the permission of Charles, had raised an army of three thousand adventurers, most of them Normans, and that a fleet was lying in the mouth of the Seine to transport them to England. He affected to receive the intelligence with joy, and immediately, to prepare the public for the event, published a long and artful proclamation, which stated that "the king's rebels and traitors, disabled and attainted by authority of the high court of parliament, of whom many were known for open murderers, adulterers, and

[1 Lingard [c] holds this opinion. He says that Richard's necessities compelled him "to adopt the thing which he refused in the name," and that by extorting money from wealthy citizens he lost what small share he still retained in their affection. According to the author of the continuation of the history of Croyland Abbey (*Hist. Croyl. contin.*[m]) these forced loans were called by the people "malevolences."]

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extortioners, had forsaken their natural country and put themselves at first under the obedience of the duke of Brittany, to whom they had made promises so unnatural and abominable that they had been refused by that prince; that they had next betaken themselves to the king's ancient enemy, Charles, calling himself king of France, and chosen for their captain one Henry Tudor, descended of bastard blood both by the father's and the mother's side, and who therefore could never have any claim to the crown of England but by conquest; that the said Henry Tudor, in order that he might achieve his false intent by the aid of the king's ancient enemy of France, had covenanted with him to give up in perpetuity all the right which the king of England had to the crown of France, to Normandy, Anjou, Maine, Guienne, Calais, and the marches, and to dissever the arms of France from the arms of England forever; that, in more proof of his said purpose of conquest, the said Henry Tudor had given away archbishoprics, bishoprics, and other dignities spiritual, and the duchies, earldoms, baronies, and other inheritances of knights, esquires, and gentlemen, within the realm; that he intended to change and subvert the laws of the same, and to do the most cruel murders, slaughters, robberies, and disherisons, that were ever seen in any Christian realm: wherefore, the king willed that all his subjects, like good and true Englishmen, should endower themselves with all their power for the defence of them, their wives, children, goods, and hereditaments, and as he, like a diligent and courageous prince, would put his most royal person to all labour and pain necessary in that behalf, to the comfort and surety of his faithful subjects, so he commanded all his said subjects to be ready in their most defensible array to do his highness service of war, when they by open proclamation or otherwise should be commanded so to do, for the resistance of the king's said rebels, traitors, and enemies."

THE BATTLE OF BOSWORTH FIELD (1485 A.D.)

Having issued instructions to his friends in the maritime counties, and established posts of cavalry on the high roads for the more speedy transmission of intelligence, Richard sent for the great seal, and fixed his headquarters at Nottingham. There he was nearer to his partisans in the north, on whose fidelity he chiefly relied; and thence, as from the centre, he could watch the extremities of the kingdom. On the 1st of August his competitor sailed from Harfleur; on the 7th he landed at Milford Haven, and directed his march through the northern districts of Wales, a tract of country in the interests of the Stanleys. He met with little to oppose or to encourage him: if the Welsh chieftains did not impede his progress, few joined his standard; and when he took possession of Shrewsbury his army did not exceed four thousand men. A week elapsed before Richard heard of his landing; but orders were instantly despatched for all his subjects to meet him at Leicester, with the most alarming menaces against the defaulters. The duke of Norfolk obeyed with the men of the eastern counties, the earl of Northumberland with the northern levies, the lord Lovet from Hampshire, and Brackenbury from London; but the man whom he most feared, the lord Stanley, replied that he was confined to his bed by the sweating sickness.

At Leicester the king found himself at the head of a numerous and well-appointed army, which, had it been attached to its leader, might have trampled under foot the contemptible force that followed the banner of his competitor. But Henry, assured by the promises of his secret adherents, continued to press forward, as if he were determined to rush into the very jaws

of destruction. He crossed the Severn at Shrewsbury; at Newport he was joined by the tenantry of the Talbots; at Stafford he had a private conference with Sir William Stanley, and consented, in order to save, if it were possible, the life of Lord Strange [Lord Stanley's son and a prisoner in Richard's hands], that the Stanleys should continue to wear the appearance of hostility, and constantly retire before him as he advanced.

On the 21st of August Richard rode from Leicester with the crown on his head, and encamped about two miles from the town of Bosworth. The same night Henry proceeded from Tamworth to Atherstone, where he joined the Stanleys, and was encouraged by the repeated arrivals of deserters from the enemy. In the morning both armies (that of Richard was double in number) advanced to Redmore; and the vanguards, commanded by the duke of Norfolk and the earl of Oxford, engaged. Richard was dismayed to see the Stanleys opposed to him, the earl of Northumberland remaining inactive at his post, and his men wavering and on the point of flying or going over to his competitor. Chancing to espy Henry, he determined to win the day or perish in the attempt. Spurring his horse and exclaiming, "Treason, treason, treason!" he slew with his own hand Sir William Brandon, the bearer of the hostile standard, struck to the ground Sir John Cheney, and made a desperate blow at his rival, when he was overpowered by numbers, thrown from his horse, and immediately slain.

RICHARD'S HEADQUARTERS
(Before the Battle of Bosworth)

Lord Stanley, taking up the crown, placed it on the head of Henry, and the conqueror was instantly greeted with the shouts of "Long live King Henry!" In the battle and pursuit the duke of Norfolk, the lord Ferrers, some knights, and about three thousand others were killed. The victors lost but few; and, to add to their joy, Lord Strange, whom Richard had ordered to be beheaded at the beginning of the battle, escaped in the confusion and rejoined his father. The body of the late king was stripped, laid across a horse behind a pursuivant-at-arms, and conducted to Leicester, where, after it had been exposed for two days, it was buried with little ceremony in the church of the Grey Friars. Henry entered the town with the same royal state with which Richard had marched out on the preceding day. He was careful, however, not to stain his triumph with blood. Of all his prisoners three only suffered death.[c]

The battle of the 22d of August was fought with so few men on either side that it would appear marvellous that it should have decided the fate of a kingdom, if we did not bear in mind that it was not fought by one section of an aroused population against another section similarly excited; but that the king himself, with a few faithful friends, was fighting with scarcely more power than that of a feudal partisan, and that when he, the first crowned sovereign since Harold that died in battle upon English ground, was struck

[1485 A.D.]

down, the contest was at an end. The feudal chain which bound the lord to the king and the vassal to the lord had been impaired in many of its links. The sentiment of loyalty to the sovereign, founded upon the spirit of patriotism, and not upon the obligations of feudal service, was scarcely yet created. That had to be born when the dominant power of the aristocracy was broken down, not so much by the force of arms or of law as by the decay of the principle which was incompatible with the civilisation that more readily assimilated with the rule of one than the rule of many. With Richard, the last of the Plantagenets, expired the political system under which England had been governed by that house for more than three centuries.[d]

Thus," says Ramsay,[o] "the Red Rose of Henry VII had avenged the White Rose of Edward IV and his sons. Ultimate victory had fallen to the house of Lancaster, and the long war of succession was at an end." If Richard had been content to play the part of a loyal subject, the house of Tudor would perhaps never have been heard of in history. But the Lancastrian dynasty showed marvellous vitality. Put down with difficulty, it rose again mysteriously in 1470. In 1483 its fortunes were again at a low ebb; indeed, it seemed on the verge of extinction. Yet two years later it had once more gained supremacy. Ramsay tells us that the accepted explanation is that one party was constitutional and parliamentary, whereas the other was legitimist and arbitrary. It is admitted that the Lancastrian government had at times indulged in strong acts, but it is claimed that they were not habitually sanguinary, and that their kings had shown themselves in harmony with English feeling in the conduct of their personal lives; whereas it is alleged that the "Yorkist rule was sanguinary from the beginning." Indeed, it is suggested that the personal delinquencies of the representatives of the house of York excited among contemporaries a repugnance that became a strong factor in determining the final rejection of that house in favour of its adversaries. Possibly the modern critic may tend to overestimate the force of this moral influence, yet it cannot well have been altogether inconsequential even in the fifteenth century.[a]

MORE'S CHARACTERIZATION OF RICHARD

Richard, duke of Gloucester, the third sonne of Richard Plantagenet, duke of York, was in wit and courage equal with the other [Edward IV], but in beauty and lineaments of nature farre underneath both [Edward IV and George duke of Clarence]. As he was small and little of stature so was he of body greatly deformed, the one shoulder higher then the other, his face small, but his countenance was cruell, and such that a man at the first aspect would judge it to savour and smell of malice, fraude, and deceit: when hee stood musing he would bite and chew beasly his nether lippe, as who said that his fierce nature in his cruell body alwaies chafed, stirred, and was ever unquiet: besides that, the dagger that hee wore, hee would when hee studied with his hand plucke up and downe in the sheath to the midst, never drawing it fully out; his wit was pregnant, quicke and ready, wilie to fiegne and apt to dissemble; hee had a proud minde, and an arrogant stomacke, the which accompanied him to his death. He was malicious, wrathfull and envious; and, as it is reported, his Mother the Dutches had much adoe in her travell, that shee could not be delivered of him uncut, and that hee came into the world the feet forward, as men be borne outward, and, as the fame ran, not untoothed: whether that men of hatred reported above the truth, or that

Nature changed his course in his beginning, which in his life committed many things unnaturally, this I leave to God's Judgment.

Hee was no evill Captaine in warre, as to the which his disposition was more inclined then to peace. Sundry Victories he had, and some Overthrowes, but never for default of his owne person, either for lacke of hardinesse or politicke order. Free hee was of his expences and somewhat above his power liberall; with large gifts he gat him unstedfast friendship; for which cause he was faine to borrow, pill, and extort in other places, which gat him stedfast hatred. Hee was close and secret, a deep dissembler, lowly of countenance, arrogant of heart, outwardly familiar where he inwardly hated, not letting to kisse whom he thought to kill, spiteful and cruell, not alway for ill will, but oftner for ambition and to serve his purpose; friend and foe were all indifferent: where his advantage grew, he spared no man's death whose life withstood his purpose. He slew in the Tower King Henry the Sixth; saying, Now is there no Heire male of King Edward the third, but we of the House of Yorke: which murder was done without King Edward his assent, which would have appointed that butcherly office to some other, rather then to his owne Brother.

Some Wise men also thinke, that his drift lacked not in helping forth his owne Brother of Clarence to his death, which thing in all appearance he resisted, although hee inwardly minded it. And the cause thereof was—as men noting his doings and proceedings did marke—because that he long in King Edward's time thought to obtaine the Crown, in case that the King his Brother, whose life he looked that ill dyet would soone shorten, should happen to decease, as he did indeed, his children being young. And then if the Duke of Clarence had lived, his pretensed purpose had been farre hindered: For if the Duke of Clarence had kept him selfe true to his Nephew the young King, every one of these casts had bin a Trumpe in the Duke of Gloucesters way: but when he was sure that his Brother of Clarence was dead, then hee knew that hee might worke without that danger. But of these points there is no certainety, and whosoever divineth or conjectureth may as well shoot too farre as too short: but this conjecture afterward tooke place (as few doe) as you shall perceive hereafter.[b]

APPENDIX

THE TEXT OF MAGNA CHARTA (1215 A.D.)

JOHN, by the grace of God king of England, lord of Ireland, duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and count of Anjou, to his archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls, barons, justiciaries, foresters, sheriffs, governors, officers, and to all bailiffs, and faithful subjects, greeting. Know ye, that we, in the presence of God, and for the salvation of our soul, and the souls of all our ancestors and heirs, and unto the honour of God and the advancement of Holy Church, and amendment of our Realm, by advice of our venerable Fathers, STEPHEN, Archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England and cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, HENRY, Archbishop of Dublin, WILLIAM of London, PETER of Winchester, JOCELIN of Bath and Glastonbury, HUGH of Lincoln, WALTER of Worcester, WILLIAM of Coventry, BENEDICT of Rochester, Bishops; of Master PANDULF, Sub-Deacon and Familiar of our Lord the Pope, Brother AYMERIC, Master of the Knights-Templars in England; and of the Noble Persons, WILLIAM MARESCALL, Earl of Pembroke, WILLIAM, Earl of Salisbury, WILLIAM, Earl of Warren, WILLIAM, Earl of Arundel, ALAN DE GALLOWAY, Constable of Scotland, WARIN FITZ GERALD, PETER FITZ HERBERT, and HUBERT DE BURGH, Seneschal of Poitou, HUGH DE NEVILLE, MATTHEW FITZ HERBERT, THOMAS BASSET, ALAN BASSET, PHILIP OF ALBINEY, ROBERT DE ROPPELL, JOHN MARESCHAL, JOHN FITZ HUGH, and others our liegemen, have, in the first place, granted to God, and by this our present Charter confirmed, for us and our heirs forever:

1. That the Church of England shall be free, and have her whole rights, and her liberties inviolable; and we will have them so observed, that it may appear thence, that the freedom of elections, which is reckoned chief and indispensable to the English Church, and which we granted and confirmed by our Charter, and obtained the confirmation of the same from our Lord the Pope Innocent III, before the discord between us and our barons, was granted of mere free will; which Charter we shall observe, and we do will it to be faithfully observed by our heirs forever. We also have granted to all the freemen of our kingdom, for us and for our heirs forever, all the underwritten liberties, to be had and holden by them and their heirs, of us and our heirs forever.

2. If any of our earls, or barons, or others, who hold of us in chief by military service, shall die, and at the time of his death his heir shall be of full age, and owes a relief, he shall have his inheritance by paying the ancient relief; that is to say, the heir or heirs of an earl, for a whole earldom, by a hundred pounds; the heir or heirs of a baron, for a whole barony, by a hundred pounds; the heir or heirs of a knight, for a whole knight's fee, by a hundred shillings at most; and whoever oweth less shall give less, according to the ancient custom of fees.

3. But if the heir of any such shall be under age, and shall be in ward when he comes of age, he shall have his inheritance without relief and without fine.

4. The keeper of the land of such an heir who shall be under age, shall take of the land of the heir none but reasonable issues, reasonable customs, and reasonable services, and that without destruction and waste of his men and his goods; and if we commit the custody of any such lands to the sheriff, or any other who is answerable to us for the issues of the land, and he shall make destruction and waste of the lands which he hath in custody, we will take of him amends, and the land shall be committed to two lawful and discreet men of that fee, who shall answer for the issues to us, or to him to whom we shall assign them: and if we sell or give to anyone the custody of any such lands, and he therein make destruction or waste, he shall lose the same custody, which shall be committed to two lawful and discreet men of that fee, who shall in like manner answer to us as aforesaid.

5. Moreover the keeper, so long as he shall have the custody of the land, shall keep up the houses, parks, warrens, ponds, mills, and other things pertaining to the land, out of the issues of the same land; and shall deliver to the heir, when he comes of full age, his whole land, stocked with ploughs and carriages, according as the time of wainage shall require, and the issues of the land can reasonably bear.

6. Heirs shall be married without disparagement, and so that before matrimony shall be contracted those who are near in blood to the heir shall have notice.

7. A widow, after the death of her husband, shall forthwith and without difficulty have her marriage portion and inheritance; nor shall she give anything for her dower, or her marriage portion or her inheritance, which her husband and she held at the day of his death; and she may remain in the mansion house of her husband forty days after his death, within which term her dower shall be assigned to her.

8. No widow shall be distrained to marry again, so long as she has a mind to live without a husband; but yet she shall give security that she will not marry without our assent, if she holds of us; or without the consent of the lord of whom she holds, if she hold of another.

9. Neither we nor our bailiffs shall seize any land or rent for any debt, so long as the chattels of the debtor are sufficient to pay the debt; nor shall the sureties of the debtor be distrained so long as the principal debtor is sufficient for the payment of the debt; but if the principal debtor shall fail in the payment of the debt, not having wherewithal to pay it, then the sureties shall answer for the debt; and if they will they shall have the lands and rents of the debtor, until they shall be satisfied for the debt which they paid for him, unless the principal debtor can show himself acquitted thereof against the said sureties.

10. If anyone have borrowed anything of the Jews, more or less, and die before the debt be satisfied, there shall be no interest paid for that debt, so long

as the heir is under age, of whomsoever he may hold; and if the debt fall into our hands we will only take the chattel mentioned in the deed.

11. And if anyone shall die indebted to the Jews, his wife shall have her dower and pay nothing of that debt; and if the deceased left children under age, they shall have necessaries provided for them, according to the tenement of the deceased; and out of the residue the debt shall be paid, saving however the service due to the lords; and in like manner shall it be done touching debts due to others than the Jews.

12. No scutage or aid shall be imposed in our kingdom, unless by the general council of our kingdom; except for ransoming our person, making our eldest son a knight, and once for marrying our eldest daughter; and for these there shall be paid only a reasonable aid. In like manner it shall be concerning the aids of the City of London.

13. And the City of London shall have all its ancient liberties and free customs, as well by land as by water: furthermore we will and grant, that all other cities and boroughs, and towns and ports, shall have all their liberties and free customs.

14. And for holding the general council of the kingdom concerning the assessment of aids, except in the three cases aforesaid, and for the assessing of scutages, we shall cause to be summoned the archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls, and greater barons of the realm, singly by our letters. And furthermore we shall cause to be summoned generally by our sheriffs and bailiffs, all others who hold of us in chief, for a certain day, that is to say, forty days before their meeting at least, and to a certain place; and in all letters of such summons we will declare the cause of such summons. And summons being thus made, the business of the day shall proceed on the day appointed, according to the advice of such as shall be present, although all that were summoned come not.

15. We will not for the future grant to anyone the right to take aid of his own free tenants, unless to ransom his body, and to make his eldest son a knight, and once to marry his eldest daughter; and for this there shall be only paid a reasonable aid.

16. No man shall be distrained to perform more service for a knight's fee, or other free tenement, than is due from thence.

17. Common pleas shall not follow our court, but shall be holden in some place certain.

18. Assizes of novel disseisin, and of mort d'ancestor, and of darrien presentment, shall not be taken but in their proper counties, and after this manner: We, or, if we should be out of the realm, our chief justiciar, shall send two justiciaries through every county four times a year, who, with four knights, chosen out of every shire by the people, shall hold the said assizes, in the county, on the day, and at the place appointed.

19. And if any matters cannot be determined on the day appointed for holding the assizes in each county, so many of the knights and freeholders as have been at the assizes aforesaid, shall stay to decide them, as is necessary, according as there is more or less business.

20. A freeman shall not be amerced for a small offence, except according to the measure of the offence; and for a great crime according to the heinousness of it, saving to him his contenement; and after the same manner a merchant, saving to him his merchandise. And a villein shall be amerced after the same manner, saving to him his wainage, if he falls under our mercy; and none of the aforesaid amerciaments shall be assessed save upon the oath of honest men in the neighbourhood.

21. Earls and barons shall not be amerced, but by their peers, and according to the degree of the offence.

22. No ecclesiastical person shall be amerced for his lay tenement, except according to the proportion of the others aforesaid, and not according to the value of his ecclesiastical benefice.

23. Neither a town nor any tenant shall be distrained to make bridges or banks unless anciently and of right they are bound to do it.

24. No sheriff, constable, coroner, or other of our bailiffs, shall hold pleas of the crown.

25. All counties, hundreds, wapentakes, and tithings, shall stand at the old rents, without any increase, except in our demesne manors.

26. If anyone holding of us a lay-fee shall die, and the sheriff, or our bailiffs, can show our letters patent, containing our summons for the debt which the dead man did owe to us, it shall be lawful for the sheriff or our bailiff to attach and inroll the chattels of the dead, found upon his lay-fee, to the value of the debt, by the view of lawful men, so, however, that nothing be removed until our whole clear debt be paid; and the rest shall be left to the executors to fulfil the testament of the dead, and if there be nothing due from him to us, all the chattels shall go to the use prescribed by the dead, saving to his wife and children their reasonable shares.

27. If any freeman shall die intestate, his chattels shall be distributed by the hands of his nearest relations and friends, by view of the church; saving to everyone the debts which the deceased owed to him.

28. No constable or bailiff of ours shall take corn or other chattels of any man, unless he presently give him money for it, or hath respite of payment by the good-will of the seller.

29. No constable shall distrain any knight to give money for castle ward, if he himself will do it in his person, or by another able man in case he cannot do it through any reasonable cause. And if we lead him, or send him in an army, he shall be free from such ward for the time he shall be in the army by our command.

30. No sheriff or bailiff of ours, or any other, shall take horses or carts of any freeman for carriage, but by the good-will of the said freeman.

31. Neither shall we nor our bailiffs take any man's timber for our castles or other uses, unless by the consent of the owner of the timber.

32. We will retain the lands of those convicted of felony only one year and a day, and then they shall be delivered to the lord of the fee.

33. All weirs for the time to come shall be done away with in the rivers of Thames and Medway, and throughout all England, except upon the sea-coast.

34. The writ which is called *præcipe*, for the future, shall not be served upon anyone, of any tenement, whereby a freeman may lose his court.

35. There shall be one measure of wine and one of ale through our whole realm; and one measure of corn, that is to say, the London quarter; and one breadth of dyed cloth, and russets, and haberjects, that is to say, two ells within the lists; and it shall be of weights as it is of measures.

36. Nothing from henceforth shall be given or taken for a writ of inquisition of life or limb, but it shall be granted freely, and not denied.

37. If any do hold of us by fee-farm, or by socage, or by burgage, and he hold also lands of any other by knight's service, we will not have the custody of the heir or land, which is holden of another man's fee by reason of that fee-farm, socage, or burgage; neither will we have the custody of such fee-farm, socage, or burgage, except knight's service was due to us out of the

same fee-farm. We will not have the custody of an heir, nor of any land which he holds of another by knight's service, by reason of any petty serjeanty that holds of us, by the service of paying a knife, an arrow, or the like.

38. No bailiff from henceforth shall put any man to his law upon his own bare assertion, without credible witnesses to prove it.

39. No freeman shall be taken or imprisoned, or disseised, or outlawed, or banished, or any ways destroyed, nor will we pass upon him, nor will we send upon him, save by the lawful judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land.

40. We will sell to no man, we will not deny to any man, either justice or right.

41. All merchants shall have safe and secure conduct, to go out of, and to come into England, and to stay there, and to pass as well by land as by water, for the purpose of buying and selling according to the ancient and allowed customs, without any evil tolls; except in time of war, or when they are of any nation at war with us. And if there be found any such in our land, in the beginning of the war, they shall be held, without damage to their bodies or goods, until it be known unto us or our chief justiciar, how our merchants be treated in the nation at war with us; and if ours be safe there, the others shall be safe in our dominions.

42. It shall be lawful, henceforth, for anyone to go out of our kingdom, and return safely and securely, by land or by water, saving his allegiance to us; unless in time of war, for some short space, for the common benefit of the realm; but prisoners and outlaws, according to the law of the land, shall be excepted, and people at war with us, and merchants who shall be in such condition as is above mentioned.

43. If any man hold of any escheat, as of the honour of Wallingford, Nottingham, Boulogne, Lancaster, or of other escheats which be in our hands, and are baronies, and shall die, his heir shall give no other relief, and perform no other service to us, than he would to the baron, if it were in the baron's hand; we will hold it after the same manner as the baron held it.

44. Those men who dwelt without the forest, from henceforth shall not come before our justiciaries of the forest, upon common summons, but such as are impleaded, or are pledges for any that are attached for something concerning the forest.

45. *We will not make any justices, constables, sheriffs, or bailiffs, unless they are such as know the law of the realm and mean duly to observe it.*

46. All barons who have founded abbeys, and have the kings of England's charters of advowson, or the ancient tenure thereof, shall have the keeping of them, when vacant, as they ought to have.

47. All forests that have been made forests in our time, shall forthwith be disforested; and the same shall be done with the river banks that have been fenced in by us in our time.

48. All evil customs concerning forests, warrens, foresters and warreners, sheriffs and their officers, rivers and their keepers, shall forthwith be inquired into in each county, by twelve sworn knights of the same shire, chosen by creditable persons of the same county; and within forty days after the said inquest, be utterly abolished, so as never to be restored: so that we are first acquainted therewith, or our justiciar, if we should not be in England.

49. We will immediately give up all hostages and charters delivered unto us by our English subjects, as securities for their keeping the peace, and yielding us faithful service.

50. We will entirely remove from our bailiwicks the relations of Gerard de Atheyes, so that for the future they shall have no bailiwick in England;

we will also remove Engelard de Cygnes, Andrew, Peter, and Gyon de Chanceles; Gyon de Cygnes, Geoffrey de Martyn and his brothers; Philip Mark and his brothers, and his nephew, Geoffrey, and their whole retinue.

51. As soon as peace is restored, we will send out of the kingdom all foreign soldiers, cross-bowmen, and stipendiaries, who are come with horses and arms to the prejudice of our people.

52. If anyone has been dispossessed or deprived by us, without the legal judgment of his peers, of his lands, castles, liberties, or right, we will forthwith restore them to him; and if any dispute arise upon this head, it shall be decided by the five-and-twenty barons hereafter mentioned, for the preservation of the peace. As for all those things of which any person has, without the legal judgment of his peers, been dispossessed or deprived, either by King Henry our father, or our brother King Richard, and which we have in our hands, or are possessed by others, and which we are bound to warrant and make good, we shall have a respite till the term usually allowed the crusaders; excepting those things about which there is a plea depending, or whereof an inquest hath been made, by our order, before we undertook the crusade, but when we return from our prilgrimage, or if perchance we tarry at home and do not make our pilgrimage, we will immediately cause full justice to be administered therein.

53. The same respite we shall have (and in the same manner about administering justice, disafforesting the forests, or letting them continue) for disafforesting the forests, which Henry our father, and our brother Richard have afforested; and for the keeping of the lands which are in another's fee, in the same manner as we have hitherto enjoyed those wardships, by reason of a fee held of us by knight's service; and for the abbeys founded in any other fee than our own, in which the lord of the fee says he has a right; and when we return from our pilgrimage, or if we tarry at home, and do not make our pilgrimage, we will immediately do full justice to all the complainants in this behalf.

54. No man shall be taken or imprisoned upon the appeal of a woman, for the death of any other than her husband.

55. All unjust and illegal fines made by us, and all amerciaments imposed unjustly and contrary to the law of the land, shall be entirely given up, or else be left to the decision of the five-and-twenty barons hereafter mentioned as sureties of the peace, or of the major part of them, together with the aforesaid Stephen, archbishop of Canterbury, if he can be present, and others whom he shall think fit to associate with him; and if he cannot be present, the business shall notwithstanding go on without him; but so that if one or more of the aforesaid five-and-twenty barons be plaintiffs in the same cause, they shall be set aside as to what concerns this particular affair, and others be chosen in their room, out of the said five-and-twenty, and sworn by the rest to decide the matter.

56. If we have disseised or dispossessed the Welsh, of any lands, liberties, or other things, without the legal judgment of their peers, either in England or in Wales, they shall be immediately restored to them; and if any dispute arise upon this head, the matter shall be determined in the March by the judgment of their peers; for tenements in England according to the law of England, for tenements in Wales according to the law of Wales, for tenements of the March according to the law of the March; the same shall the Welsh do to us and our subjects.

57. As for all those things of which a Welshman hath, without the legal judgment of his peers, been disseised or deprived of by King Henry our

father, or our brother King Richard, and which we either have in our hands, or others are possessed of, and for which we are obliged to give a guarantee, we shall have a respite till the time generally allowed the crusaders; excepting those things about which a suit is depending, or whereof an inquest has been made by our order, before we undertook the crusade: but when we return, or if we stay at home without performing our pilgrimage, we will immediately do them full justice, according to the laws of the Welsh and of the parts before mentioned.

58. We will without delay dismiss the son of Llewelyn, and all the Welsh hostages, and release them from the engagements they have entered into with us for the preservation of the peace.

59. We will treat with Alexander, King of the Scots, concerning the restoring his sisters and hostages, and his right and liberties, in the same form and manner as we shall do to the rest of our barons of England; unless by the charters which we have from his father, William, late King of the Scots, it ought to be otherwise; but this shall be left to the determination of his peers in our court.

60. All the aforesaid customs and liberties, which we have decreed to be observed in our kingdom, as far as it belongs to us, towards our people of our kingdom, the clergy as well as laity shall observe, as far as they are concerned, towards their own dependents.

61. And whereas, for the honour of God and the amendment of our kingdom, and for the better quieting the discord that has arisen between us and our barons, we have granted all these things aforesaid; willing to render them firm and lasting, we do give and grant our subjects the underwritten security, namely, that the barons may choose five-and-twenty barons of the kingdom, whom they think worthy; who shall take care, with all their might, to hold and observe, and cause to be observed, the peace and liberties we have granted them, and by this our present charter confirmed; so that if we, our justiciar, our bailiffs, or any of our officers, shall in any circumstance fail in the performance of them, towards any person, or shall break through any of these articles of peace and security, and the offence be notified to four barons chosen out of the five-and-twenty before mentioned, the said four barons shall repair to us, or our justiciar, if we are out of the realm, and, laying open the grievance, shall petition to have it redressed without delay: and if it be not redressed by us, or if we should chance to be out of the realm, if it should not be redressed by our justiciar, within forty days, reckoning from the time it has been notified to us, or to our justiciar (if we should be out of the realm), the four barons aforesaid shall lay the cause before the rest of the five-and-twenty barons; and the said five-and-twenty barons, together with the community of the whole kingdom, shall distrain and distress us in all possible ways, by seizing our castles, lands, possessions, and in any other manner they can, till the grievance is redressed according to their pleasure; saving harmless our own person, and the persons of our queen and children; and when it is redressed, they shall obey us as before. And any person whatsoever in the kingdom may swear that he will obey the orders of the five-and-twenty barons aforesaid, in the execution of the premises, and will distress us, jointly with them, to the utmost of his power; and we give public and free liberty to anyone that shall please to swear to this, and never will hinder any person from taking the same oath.

62. As for all those of our subjects who will not, of their own accord, swear to join the five-and-twenty barons in distraining and distressing us, we will issue orders to make them take the same oath as aforesaid. And if any

one of the five-and-twenty barons dies, or goes out of the kingdom, or is hindered any other way from carrying the things aforesaid into execution, the rest of the said five-and-twenty barons may choose another in his room, at their discretion, who shall be sworn in like manner as the rest. In all things that are committed to the execution of these five-and-twenty barons, if, when they are all assembled together, they should happen to disagree about any matter, and some of them, when summoned, will not, or cannot, come, whatever is agreed upon, or enjoined, by the major part of those that are present, shall be reputed as firm and valid as if all the five-and-twenty had given their consent; and the aforesaid five-and-twenty shall swear that all the premises they shall faithfully observe, and cause with all their power to be observed. And we will not, by ourselves, or by any other, procure anything whereby any of these concessions and liberties may be revoked or lessened; and if any such thing be obtained, let it be null and void; neither shall we ever make use of it, either by ourselves or any other. And all the ill-will, indignations, and rancours that have arisen between us and our subjects, of the clergy and laity, from the first breaking out of the dissensions between us, we do fully remit and forgive: moreover, all trespasses occasioned by the said dissensions, from Easter in the fifteenth year of our reign, till the restoration of peace and tranquillity, we hereby entirely remit to all, both clergy and laity, and as far as in us lies do fully forgive. We have, moreover, caused to be made for them the letters patent testimonial of Stephen, lord archbishop of Canterbury, Henry, lord archbishop of Dublin, and the bishops aforesaid, as also of master Pandulf, for the security and concessions aforesaid.

63. Wherefore we will and firmly enjoin, that the Church of England be free, and that all the men in our kingdom have and hold all the aforesaid liberties, rights, and concessions, truly and peaceably, freely and quietly, fully and wholly to themselves and their heirs, of us and our heirs, in all things and places, forever, as is aforesaid. It is also sworn, as well on our part as on the part of the barons, that all the things aforesaid shall be observed in good faith and without evil intent. Given under our hand, in the presence of the witnesses above named, and many others, in the meadow called Runingmede, between Windsor and Staines, the 15th day of June, in the 17th year of our reign.[m]

THE HISTORY OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

BRIEF REFERENCE-LIST OF AUTHORITIES BY CHAPTERS

[The letter *a* is reserved for Editorial Matter]

CHAPTER I. PRE-HISTORIC AND ROMAN BRITAIN (— TO 449 A.D.)

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CHAPTER II. THE ANGLO-SAXON CONQUEST (449–871 A.D.)

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CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE YEAR 1485

B.C.

55 Julius Cæsar invades Britain with a force of 10,000, but returns to Gaul without attempting to conquer the country.

54 Cæsar invades Britain a second time with a larger force, compels several tribes to give hostages and promise tribute, and returns to Gaul. For almost a century after his departure Britain is left to itself.

A.D.

43 The emperor Claudius sends Aulus Plautius into Britain. After much fighting he reduces the country south of the Severn and Avon.

50 Defeat of Caractacus, chief of the Catuvellauni.

58 Suetonius Paullinus becomes governor and proceeds to a conquest of the West.

61 Boadicea, wife of a chief of the Iceni, leads a revolt against Roman oppression, and seventy thousand Roman colonists are said to have been put to the sword.

78 Agricola becomes governor and completes the Roman conquest as far north as the Firths of Clyde and Forth, between which he erects a line of forts to stop the raids of Picts and Scots.

119 The emperor Hadrian visits Britain.

121 Hadrian builds a wall across the island from the Solway to the Tyne.

211 The emperor Severus dies in York after an expedition against the Picts and Scots.

306 Constantine is proclaimed emperor in Britain.

383 Maximus is proclaimed emperor by the soldiers in Britain.

FIFTH CENTURY

401–410 The Roman legions are gradually withdrawn from Britain, and in the latter year the emperor Honorius finally renounces his sovereignty over the island.

449 A band of Jutes lands at Ebbsfleet in the Isle of Thanet on the invitation of Vortigern, a powerful British chief, who wished to use them in his wars with the Picts. Subsequently his allies turn upon him, wrest the surrounding country and coast from British control, and lay the foundation of the kingdom of Kent.

477 Saxons, under their chief, Ella, begin the conquest of the British shore west of Kent.

491 Ella captures the British stronghold of Anderida and lays the foundation of the kingdom of Sussex (the South Saxons).

495 Cerdic, chief of a band of Saxons known as Gewissas, lands on the southern coast of Southampton Water, and establishes the kingdom of the West Saxons, or Wessex.

SIXTH CENTURY

520 The West Saxon advance is temporarily checked by the Britons in a battle fought at Mount Badon in Dorsetshire.

547 The kingdom of Bernicia is founded by Ida, a chief of the Angles.

552 Cynric, king of the West Saxons, captures the British stronghold of Sorbiodunum.

571 The West Saxons turn northward and occupy the upper valley of the Ouse and the valley of the Severn.

577 The West Saxons win the battle of Deorham, and divide the West Welsh from the North Welsh.
584 Æthelberht, king of Kent, marries Bertha, daughter of Charibert, king of the Franks.
588 Bernicia and Deira, two kingdoms of the North Angles, are united under Æthelric, king of Bernicia, to form the kingdom of Northumbria.
590 Æthelberht of Kent becomes overlord of Essex, East Anglia, and most of the other Saxon communities south of the Humber.
593 Æthelfrith becomes king of Northumbria.
597 Pope Gregory the Great sends Augustine to England as leader of a band of Christian missionaries. Æthelberht and thousands of his followers are converted, and Augustine is made the first English archbishop, with his see established at Canterbury.

SEVENTH CENTURY

603 Æthelfrith of Northumbria defeats the Scots at Degsastan.
607 Æthelberht defeats the Welsh at Chester and extends his realm to the sea.
616 Æthelberht of Kent dies and the overlordship of Kent ends with him.
617 Eadwine of Deira becomes king of Northumbria, and gradually extends his supremacy over all the English states except Kent, with which he is allied through a marriage with Æthelbergh, sister of the Kentish king
627 Eadwine and his principal thanes are converted to Christianity by Paulinus, who becomes first bishop of the see of York.
628 Penda, king of Mercia, forms a confederacy of central English states which he leads in revolt against Eadwine.
633 Eadwine is defeated and slain in battle by Penda and his allies at Hatfield.
635 Oswald partially re-establishes Northumbrian supremacy.
642 Oswald is overthrown and slain in battle with Penda at Maserfield and his possessions divided.
651 Oswin reunites Deira and Bernicia.
655 Oswin and the Northumbrians defeat and slay Penda of Mercia in battle at Winwaedfield.
668 Theodore of Tarsus is made archbishop of Canterbury, and begins the organisation of an English national church.
673 The first national council of the English Church assembles at Hertford.
683 Ine becomes king of the West Saxons.

EIGHTH CENTURY

735 Death of Bede, the first English historian.
757 Offa becomes king of Mercia.
775 Offa subdues Kent.
777 Offa defeats the West Saxons at Bensington.
787 The Danes first land in England on the coast of Devonshire.

NINTH CENTURY

802 Egbert becomes king of Wessex.
825 Egbert defeats the Mercians at Ellandum.
826 Kent, Essex, Sussex, and East Anglia submit to Egbert.
827 Northumbria acknowledges the supremacy of Egbert, who is now king of all England south of the Thames, and overlord of all the English as far north as the Forth.
834 The Northmen ravage the coast of Sussex and Dorset.
835 The Northmen in conjunction with the Britons of Cornwall advance eastward into Wessex, but are met and decisively defeated by Egbert at Hengests' Down.
839 Egbert dies, and is succeeded by his son Æthelwulf.
851 The Northmen remain over winter in England for the first time. They sack London and Canterbury, and are finally defeated by Æthelwulf at Ockley, in Surrey.
858 Æthelwulf dies, and is succeeded by his sons, Æthelbald, who rules two years (858–860), and Æthelberht, who rules six years (860–866).
866 Æthelred, third son of Æthelwulf, becomes king, and undertakes active campaigns against the Northmen, who had made successful inroads into East Anglia, Mercia, and Northumbria, and had begun to fortify and settle on the lands they had conquered.
870 East Anglia is completely subjugated by the Northmen, and its king, Eadmund, is put to death by them. The king of Mercia is compelled to pay tribute to the Northmen.
871 Alfred, the fourth son of Æthelwulf, succeeds Æthelred as king. The conquests of the Northmen have limited his sovereignty to Wessex and to Kent and Sussex, which by

this time have been completely annexed to it. The Northmen continue their conquests, and in the next six years subjugate the Northumbrians and Mercians, whose lands they apportion amongst their warriors.

878 Alfred retires to Athelney, in Somerset, where he gathers an army together with which he administers a severe defeat to Guthrum, the Danish king of East Anglia. The treaty of Chippenham, or Wedmore, is arranged between Alfred and Guthrum, by which Alfred's sovereignty is limited to Wessex, Sussex, Kent, and western Mercia.

886 Guthrum surrenders London and the surrounding district to Alfred.

893 Northmen, whose advance into France had been checked, begin a series of raids on the southern coast of England.

897 Alfred builds a new fleet of swift sailing vessels and defeats the invaders in a decisive sea-fight, which puts an end to their depredations.

TENTH CENTURY

901 Alfred dies, and is succeeded by his son Edward the Elder, who renews the struggle with the Northmen and reconquers England as far north as the Humber, aided by his sister Æthelflæd, the "Lady of the Mercians."

918 On the death of Æthelflæd, Mercia is annexed to Wessex.

922 The "Five Boroughs" of the Danes submit to Edward. The North Welsh acknowledge Edward's sovereignty.

924 The Northumbrians, Scotch, and Strathclyde Welsh acknowledge the overlordship of Edward.

926 Æthelstan succeeds Edward and rules fifteen years, during which he brings Danish Northumbria under his direct rule and makes his supremacy most complete in western England.

937 Æthelstan defeats a coalition of Irish, Scotch, and Welsh at Brunanburh.

940 Eadmund succeeds Æthelstan.

945 Eadmund conquers Cumberland and gives it to Malcolm on military tenure.

946 Eadmund is succeeded by his brother Eadred, who rules nine years, and leaves England united from the Forth to the Channel. The distinctions between the English and the Danes are almost wiped out.

955 Eadred is succeeded by Eadwig, who makes his younger brother Eadgar under-king in Northumbria.

957 All England north of the Thames revolts, and Eadgar is chosen king.

959 Eadwig dies, and Eadgar becomes king of all England.

960 Dunstan becomes archbishop of Canterbury, retaining his position as Eadgar's principal adviser.

975 Eadward succeeds his father and rules during four years of internal strife. He is finally murdered near Corfe, it is supposed by direction of his stepmother, the mother of Æthelred the Unready, who then becomes king.

984 The Danish invasions are begun again.

988 Death of Dunstan. Æthelred quarrels with his Ealdormen.

991 The East Saxons are defeated by the Danes at Maldon, and Æthelred is compelled to levy the "Danegeld" to buy them off.

994 Danish attack on London is repulsed.

ELEVENTH CENTURY

1002 Æthelred, hoping to secure the help of the Normans in repelling the Danes, marries Emma, daughter of Richard I, duke of Normandy. A general massacre of the Danes occurs on St. Brice's Day.

1003 Sweyn, king of the Danes, invades England to revenge the massacre of his countrymen.

1012 Ælfheah (Saint Alphege), archbishop of Canterbury, is murdered by the Danes.

1013 Sweyn overruns all England, and Æthelred flees to Normandy, but the following year Sweyn dies suddenly and Æthelred returns.

1016 Eadmund Ironside succeeds Æthelred and fights six battles with the Danes. Finally, through the treachery of some of his followers, he is overpowered at Assandun. Eadmund divides England with Canute, son of Svend, Eadmund retaining Wessex, Essex, and East Anglia, and Canute Northumbria and Mercia. Eadmund dies, and Canute becomes king of all England.

1017 Canute marries Emma, widow of Æthelred, and rules England as an English king, sending most of his warriors back to Denmark.

1020 Godwin becomes earl of Wessex.

1027 Canute visits Rome.

1031 Malcolm of Scotland acknowledges the overlordship of Canute.

1035 Canute dies, and the succession is disputed by his two sons, Harold and Harthacnut. Godwin and the West Saxons hold the south of England for Harthacnut, who remains in Denmark. Harold rules in the north.
1040 Harold dies, and Harthacnut comes to England and rules for two years.
1042 Edward the Confessor, son of Ethelred, is chosen king, largely through the influence of Earl Godwin, who for several years is the virtual ruler of England.
1045 Edward marries Eadgyth, daughter of Godwin.
1051 Robert of Jumiêges, a Norman, is made archbishop of Canterbury. Godwin quarrels with Edward and is banished. William of Normandy visits England, and Edward promises to make him his successor.
1052 Godwin and his sons return to England; the Norman archbishop is deposed and replaced by Stigand, an Englishman.
1053 Godwin dies. His son Harold becomes earl of Wessex and practically rules England in Edward's name.
1063 Harold reduces Wales to submission.
1066 Edward dies, and Harold is chosen king by the witan and crowned at Westminster. William of Normandy claims the throne and prepares at once to invade England. Harold marches to the north of England and at Stamford Bridge defeats Tostig, his rebel brother, and Harold Hardrada, king of Norway, who had formed an alliance and were overrunning Yorkshire. Harold returns to the south to oppose William, who has landed at Pevensey. The battle of Hastings (or Senlac) is fought. Harold is defeated and killed. Eadgar Ætheling, grandson of Eadmund Ironside, is chosen king by the witan, but submits, together with the principal English nobles and the city of London.
1068 William subdues the west of England.
1069 William puts down a great uprising in the north led by Eadgar Ætheling and aided by Svend, king of Denmark.
1070 The conquest of England is practically completed. Lanfranc becomes archbishop of Canterbury.
1071 Hereward makes the last struggle for English independence.
1072 Malcolm, king of the Scots, invades England, but is pursued as far as the Tay by William, who secures from him an acknowledgment of his overlordship.
1075 William puts down the first rising of the Norman barons.
1077 The revolt of Robert.
1080 The uprising at Durham.
1082 Odo is arrested.
1085 The *Domesday Book* is begun.
1086 William assembles a great court (gemot) at Salisbury, where all the landholders in England swear allegiance to him.
1087 William dies, and is succeeded as king by his second son, William Rufus.
1088 The Norman barons, led by Odo of Bayeaux, rise in revolt and declare for Robert, duke of Normandy, the Conqueror's eldest son. William Rufus rallies the English about him, besieges and captures Odo at Rochester, and the uprising is quelled.
1089 Lanfranc dies. Ranulf Flambard becomes the chief minister and counsellor of the king, and systematises the feudal dues.
1091 Malcolm of Scotland invades England, but is compelled by William Rufus to do homage.
1093 Anselm becomes archbishop of Canterbury.
1095 William Rufus puts down a revolt of the barons in the north led by Robert Mowbray, earl of Northumberland.
1096 Robert of Normandy goes on the First Crusade, and pledges Normandy to William Rufus to raise money for his expedition
1097 Anselm after a quarrel with William Rufus retires to Rome, and the king seizes his estates.

TWELFTH CENTURY

1100 William Rufus is killed while hunting in the New Forest. He is succeeded by his younger brother, Henry I. Flambard is imprisoned and Anselm recalled. Henry marries Matilda, daughter of Malcolm of Scotland.
1101 Robert of Normandy, urged by Flambard, lays claim to the crown and invades England, but abandons his claim by treaty, without fighting, on discovering Henry's strength.
1102 Revolt of Norman barons, led by Robert of Bellême, is suppressed.
1106 Henry invades Normandy and defeats Robert at Tinchebrai. Robert is imprisoned for the rest of his life (28 years) in Cardiff castle. Henry becomes duke of the Normans.
1107 Henry and Anselm disagree over the question of investiture, but a compromise is effected. Roger of Salisbury becomes justiciar, and organises the Curia Regis and court of exchequer.

1114 Henry's daughter Matilda marries the emperor Henry V.
1117 William Clito, son of Robert, organises a revolt in Normandy, and is supported by Louis VI of France and the counts of Flanders and Anjou.
1119 Henry defeats William Clito and his allies at the battle of Brenville.
1120 Henry's only son, William, is drowned at sea.
1126 The barons agree to accept as their sovereign Henry's daughter, the empress Matilda, whose husband, Henry V, had died the previous year.
1128 Matilda marries Geoffrey Plantagenet, count of Anjou. William, earl of Flanders, dies.
1133 A son, afterwards Henry II, born to Matilda. The barons again swear allegiance to her.
1135 Henry I dies. Stephen of Blois, nephew of Henry I, is received as king by the city of London, chosen by the barons, and crowned at Winchester.
1137 David of Scotland, uncle of Matilda, invades England.
1138 David is defeated near Northallerton in the "battle of the Standard."
1138 Robert, earl of Gloucester, an illegitimate son of Henry I, revolts and declares for Matilda. Civil war becomes general, and for several years a state of anarchy exists.
1141 Matilda defeats Stephen in battle at Lincoln and takes him prisoner. Matilda is generally acknowledged as queen, but estranges her supporters by her harsh and arrogant rule.
1142 Robert of Gloucester taken prisoner by the Londoners, and exchanged for Stephen, who besieges Matilda at Oxford. She escapes, and leaves England.
1149 Henry, son of Matilda, becomes duke of Normandy, and on his father's death, in the next year, count of Anjou.
1152 Henry marries Eleanor of Aquitaine, divorced wife of Louis VII of France.
1152 Henry invades England and renews the war. On the death of Eustace, Stephen's heir, a treaty is arranged at Wallingford between Henry and Stephen by which the succession is settled on Henry.
1154 Stephen dies, and is succeeded by Henry II. Henry completes the destruction of the "adulterine castles," and establishes peace and order throughout England. Thomas à Becket is made chancellor.
1162 Thomas à Becket becomes archbishop of Canterbury.
1164 The Great Council adopts the Constitutions of Clarendon. Thomas quarrels with the king and flees to France.
1166 The king and council issue the Assize of Clarendon, reforming the judicial system of England.
1170 Thomas à Becket returns to England and is murdered.
1171 Henry goes to Ireland, where his supremacy is acknowledged by the native chiefs.
1172 Henry submits to the legates of the pope. Prince Henry is crowned.
1173 Prince Henry flees to the court of his father-in-law, Louis of France. Henry's sons league against him, and are supported by the kings of France and Scotland and the count of Flanders. Henry defeats the allies in Normandy.
1174 William the Lion, king of Scotland, invades England, but is captured at Alnwick. William acknowledges the sovereignty of Henry over Scotland.
1181 Henry issues the Assize of Arms reorganising the old fyrd, or national militia.
1183 Prince Henry, eldest son of Henry, dies.
1186 Geoffrey, Henry's second son, dies, and Richard becomes heir to the throne.
1188 The Saladin tithe to raise funds for the third crusade is levied.
1189 Henry dies, and is succeeded by Richard. Richard persecutes the Jews to raise money for his crusade, and leaves England.
1190 William Longchamp becomes justiciar.
1191 Richard marries Berengaria of Navarre. He proceeds to the Holy Land and takes Acre, Geoffrey, archbishop of York, and John, Richard's brother, combine and expel Longchamps from England.
1192 Richard, returning from the Holy Land, is seized by Leopold of Austria and given into the hands of the emperor Henry VI, by whom he is imprisoned.
1194 Richard is set at liberty upon payment of a heavy ransom. He visits England, gathers funds by extortionate taxation, and crosses to Normandy, where he engages in war with Philip of France. He never returns to England.
1199 Richard is mortally wounded in an attack on Châlus, in Limousin, and dies. John succeeds him as king of England.

THIRTEENTH CENTURY

1200 John makes peace with Philip. He divorces his English wife, Hadwisa of Gloucester, and marries Isabella of Angoulême. The barons of Poitou, led by Isabella's betrothed husband, Hugh de Lusignan, rise in revolt.
1202 Philip summons John to answer the charges of the Poitevins. John refuses. Philip and Prince Arthur, John's nephew, attack his French possessions.

1203 Arthur is captured by John and disappears.
1204 Philip overruns Normandy, Anjou, Maine, and Touraine, which submit with little show of resistance.
1208 England is placed under an interdict by Pope Innocent III, for John's refusal to accept Stephen Langton as archbishop of Canterbury.
1209 John is excommunicated by the pope.
1211 Innocent threatens to depose John and give his kingdom to Philip.
1213 John submits to the pope, accepts Langton, and does homage for his kingdom. A representative assembly summoned by John, consisting of four men from each county, meets at St. Albans.
1214 Battle of Bouvines. Philip defeats the allied forces of the earl of Salisbury and Emperor Otto of Germany in Flanders. John makes peace with Philip.
1215 The barons collect an army and force John to sign the Great Charter at Runnymede (June 15).
1216 War between John and the barons. John's mercenaries overrun England. The barons invite Louis, eldest son of Philip, to be king. Louis lands at Thanet with an army and enters London. John dies. John's son Henry III is crowned, and the barons rally about him. The earl of Pembroke becomes regent.
1217 Louis is defeated at Lincoln. Hubert de Burgh defeats the French fleet off Dover. The treaty of Lambeth is arranged, by which Louis submits, and leaves England.
1219 Hubert de Burgh, the justiciar, is for thirteen years the real ruler of England. The baronial opposition is overcome, and John's foreign favourites driven from power.
1227 Henry declares himself of age.
1232 Henry dismisses Hubert de Burgh, and replaces him with Peter des Roches, under whose rule foreigners, particularly Poitevins, obtain great influence and power in England.
1234 Edmund Rich, archbishop of Canterbury, insists upon and secures Peter's dismissal from office.
1236 Henry marries Eleanor of Provençe. High offices are distributed to Provençals.
1238 Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester, marries the king's sister Eleanor.
1242 The barons refuse to furnish Henry funds for the prosecution of war in Poitou.
1243 Henry surrenders all claims to Poitou.
1244 The Great Council, now beginning to be known as parliament, asks for control over the appointment of ministers.
1254 Representative knights of the shire are for the first time summoned to the parliament.
1257 Simon de Montfort becomes leader of the baronial opposition.
1258 By the Provisions of Oxford which parliament (the Mad Parliament) adopts, and which the king is forced to accept, the government is placed in the hands of baronial committees. Foreigners are forced to give up lands and offices. Peace with France.
1263 Civil war between the baronial and royal parties.
1264 By the Mise of Amiens, Louis IX of France attempts in vain to settle the dispute in England which had been laid before him as arbitrator. Both Londoners and barons refuse to accept Louis' decision. Earl Simon defeats the king at Lewes. Henry and Prince Edward are captured. The Mise of Lewes agreed to.
1265 Earl Simon's parliament meets. Towns and boroughs are represented for the first time. The earl of Gloucester deserts Simon and joins Edward, who has escaped from his captors. Edward and Gloucester defeat Earl Simon at Evesham. Simon is killed.
1267 Parliament at Marlborough, with Edward's approval, enacts reforms for which Simon contended. Edward becomes the real head of the government.
1270 Edward joins the seventh crusade.
1272 Henry dies, and Edward is proclaimed king during his absence in the Holy Land.
1274 Edward returns to England and is crowned. Robert Burnell becomes chancellor.
1277 Edward suppresses an uprising of Llewelyn and the Welsh.
1279 Statute of mortmain is passed, to check the transfer of property to the church.
1282 Llewelyn and his brother David lead the Welsh in revolt. Edward marches against the Welsh and defeats them. Llewelyn is slain.
1283 David is captured and executed. The statute of Wales is passed.
1286 Edward goes to Gascony and remains three years. He mediates in the quarrel between France and Aragon.
1289 Edward returns to England and dismisses and punishes corrupt judges.
1290 All Jews are compelled to leave England. The statute "*Quia Emptores*" forbids subinfeudation. Death of Queen Eleanor.
1291 Scottish nobles and clergy meet Edward at Norham, and acknowledge his right to decide the disputed succession.
1292 Edward decides the Scottish succession in favour of John Baliol, who does homage to Edward for his kingdom.
1294 A quarrel begins between Philip IV of France and Edward.

1295 A league between France and Scotland is formed, which lasts for over three hundred years. The "Model Parliament" meets—all three estates being fully represented for the first time. Edward invades Scotland.
1296 Battle of Dunbar. Baliol surrenders and is dispossessed.
1297 Edward prepares for war with France, but experiences difficulties in securing funds. Edward goes to Flanders. The rising of William Wallace in Scotland. The English are defeated at Cambuskenneth, near Stirling. Wallace invades the north of England. Edward signs the *"Confirmatio Cartarum"* at Ghent. Truce with France is arranged.
1298 Edward invades Scotland, and defeats Wallace at Falkirk. Wallace flees to France.
1299 Treaty of Chartres between France and England. Guienne restored to the English. Edward marries Margaret, sister of Philip.

FOURTEENTH CENTURY

1303 The Scots under the regent, Comyn, defeat the English. Edward invades and subdues Scotland.
1305 Wallace is betrayed to the English and executed.
1306 Robert Bruce slays Comyn, and is crowned king of the Scots at Scone. The English invade Scotland. Bruce is defeated and his force scattered.
1307 Edward, on his way to Scotland, dies near Carlisle. Edward II succeeds to the throne, and allows himself to be ruled by Piers Gaveston, a Gascon adventurer, whom he creates earl of Cornwall. Bruce wins victories in Scotland.
1308 The barons demand Gaveston's dismissal. Edward evades it by appointing him lord deputy of Ireland. Imprisonment of knights Templars.
1310 The lords ordainers are appointed to carry out administrative reforms.
1311 Gaveston is banished by parliament, but returns.
1312 The barons, under Thomas of Lancaster, take up arms and seize Gaveston, who is executed without trial. The king is forced to pardon the barons.
1314 Edward takes an army into Scotland to relieve Stirling, but is defeated at Bannockburn. All Scotland is lost to Edward. Lancaster becomes chief minister.
1315 Edward Bruce invades Ireland. The Scots ravage Northumberland.
1318 Robert Bruce takes Berwick and ravages Yorkshire. Edward Bruce is defeated and killed at Dundalk.
1320 Hugh Despenser and his son obtain great influence with Edward.
1321 Parliament banishes the Despensers. Lancaster, Hereford, and Roger Mortimer rouse the Welsh marchers to revolt and seek the alliance of Robert Bruce. Mortimer submits to Edward.
1322 Hereford is killed and Lancaster is captured at Boroughbridge. Lancaster executed. Hugh Despenser made earl of Winchester.
1323 Edward acknowledges Bruce's title as king of the Scots and agrees to a thirteen years' truce.
1325 Difficulties with France. Queen Isabella and Prince Edward go to Paris to arrange a settlement, where they fall under the influence of the exiled Roger Mortimer. A conspiracy against Edward is formed.
1326 The queen, Prince Edward, and Mortimer land with an army in Suffolk. London declares for the queen. Edward and the Despensers are captured. The Despensers are executed.
1327 Parliament at Westminster forces the resignation of Edward. Prince Edward proclaimed king as Edward III. Edward II murdered in Berkeley castle. Isabella and Mortimer rule England for the young king. The government nominally in the hands of a council of regency. Bruce continues to harry northern England.
1328 Mortimer acknowledges the complete independence of Scotland. Edward marries Philippa of Hainault. Mortimer's unpopularity grows.
1330 Mortimer secures the execution of the earl of Kent, the king's uncle. Edward conspires with Henry of Lancaster against Mortimer. Mortimer is seized and executed.
1332 Death of Robert Bruce. Edward Baliol, supported by the English, attempts to seize the throne. He is crowned, but is subsequently driven back to England.
1333 The Scots invade England, but are defeated at Halidon Hill by the English, who reinstate Baliol.
1335 Edward invades Scotland with Baliol, who has been a second time expelled by the Scots.
1336 Philip VI of France, in alliance with the Scots, invades the English possessions in Gascony.
1337 Edward asserts his claim to the French throne. The Hundred Years' War is begun.
1338 Edward forms an alliance with the Flemish towns and the emperor Lewis of Bavaria. Edward lands in Antwerp.
1339 Edward unsuccessfully invades France.

1340 French fleet burns Southampton and controls the Channel. The English fleet defeats and almost destroys the French fleet at the battle of Sluys.
1341 Edward supports the claims of John de Montfort to the duchy of Brittany. David Bruce returns to Scotland. Edward's continental allies desert him.
1346 Edward and his son, the Black Prince, lead an army into Normandy. Edward ravages Normandy and advances almost to Paris. He retreats toward Calais, but is overtaken at Crécy by Philip with an army twice the size of his own. The French are decisively defeated, and Edward retreats to Calais. David II of Scotland invades England, but is defeated and captured at Neville's Cross.
1347 Calais surrenders to Edward, and a temporary truce is arranged with Philip.
1348 The Black Death begins its ravages in England.
1355 The war is renewed. The Black Prince plunders the south of France.
1356 The Black Prince advances into central France. With a force of eight thousand men he is overtaken at Poitiers by King John II of France and an army of fifty thousand. John is defeated and taken prisoner.
1357 Edward changes his Scotch policy and reinstates David II.
1360 Edward invades France. The treaty of Bretigny. Edward renounces his claim to the French crown. John is released.
1363 The Black Prince becomes governor of Aquitaine. He takes the part of Pedro of Castile against the usurping Henry of Trastamara.
1369 War between England and France is renewed, and Edward again assumes the title of King of France. Bertrand du Guesclin successfully opposes the English in the south of France.
1371 The Black Prince returns to England. The English in Aquitaine are driven to the coast towns.
1373 John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, leads a disastrous expedition from Calais to Bordeaux.
1375 Truce with France leaves only Calais, Bordeaux, and Bayonne in English hands.
1376 The duke of Lancaster becomes the virtual head of the government. The Good Parliament meets. Death of the Black Prince.
1377 Edward III dies. Richard II, son of the Black Prince, becomes king. The French renew their attacks on the English coast. A council of regency is formed, from which the royal princes are excluded.
1379 A poll tax is imposed.
1381 Wycliffe declares his disbelief in the doctrine of transubstantiation. The Peasants' Revolt breaks out. Wat Tyler and Jack Straw lead a host of one hundred thousand peasants to London. Richard meets the peasants at Smithfield. Wat Tyler is killed, and the revolt is suppressed with great severity.
1382 Richard marries Anne of Bohemia.
1384 Death of Wycliffe.
1385 Richard invades Scotland and burns Edinburgh.
1386 John of Gaunt goes to Spain, and Thomas, duke of Gloucester, the king's youngest uncle, assumes control. Suffolk, the chancellor, is impeached, and commissioners of regency are appointed for one year to regulate the realm.
1387 Richard prepares to oppose the commission. The lords appellant take up arms.
1388 The king's principal supporters are charged with treason, before the "Merciless" Parliament. The Scots win the battle of Otterburn, but Douglas is slain.
1389 Richard dismisses the council, assumes personal charge of the government, and rules for seven years as a constitutional monarch. Truce with France.
1396 Richard marries Isabella of France, and a truce of twenty-eight years is arranged.
1397 Richard, fearing a plot, arrests Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick. Arundel is beheaded. Gloucester dies in prison.
1398 The parliament of Shrewsbury, at Richard's bidding, delegates parliamentary power to a committee of eighteen, thus freeing the king from constitutional restraints. Hereford, son of John of Gaunt, and Norfolk are banished.
1399 Death of John of Gaunt. Hereford, now duke of Lancaster, lands at Ravenspur, and is joined by the duke of York and the Percys. Richard is imprisoned in the Tower, and compelled to resign his crown. Parliament formally deposes the king. Henry of Lancaster becomes king as Henry IV.

FIFTEENTH CENTURY

1400 Richard II disappears. The Welsh rise in revolt under Owen Glendower.
1401 A statute for the burning of heretics (*De heretico comburendo*) is passed.
1402 The Scots invade England, and are defeated by the Percys at Homildon Hill.
1403 The revolt of the Percys. Henry defeats the Percys at Shrewsbury. Harry Hotspur is killed.
1404 France forms an alliance with Glendower.

1405 The Scotch prince James falls into Henry's hands on his way to France. Mowbray, the earl marshal, and Scrope, archbishop of York, conspire against Henry and are executed. The French land in Wales.
1408 The earl of Northumberland again revolts, and is defeated and killed.
1411 Henry quarrels with his son Prince Henry.
1413 Henry IV dies, and is succeeded by his son Henry V. Henry actively persecutes the Lollards.
1414 Henry reasserts the English claim to the French crown. He forms an alliance with the duke of Burgundy.
1415 Henry discovers a plot to place Edmund Mortimer, earl of March, on the throne, and executes the conspirators, including the earl of Cambridge. Henry leads an army into France, and captures Harfleur. Henry defeats the French at Agincourt and captures Charles, duke of Orleans. Henry returns to London in triumph.
1417 Henry invades Normandy. Sir John Oldcastle, the Lollard leader, is executed.
1418 Henry captures Caen, and continues his conquest of Normandy.
1419 Rouen, the last of the Norman strongholds, surrenders to Henry.
1420 Treaty of Troyes. Henry marries Catherine of France, and rules France as regent.
1421 The duke of Clarence, brother of the king, killed in battle with the French and Scotch at Baugé. Henry drives the French across the Loire.
1422 Henry dies, and is succeeded by his infant son Henry VI. John, duke of Bedford, uncle of the king, becomes protector and proceeds to France, where he acts as regent. Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, is regent in England.
1424 Peace is made with Scotland, and the captive James restored to his throne. Bedford defeats the French at Verneuil.
1425 Gloucester quarrels with his uncle, the chancellor, Henry Beaufort. Beaufort is made a cardinal.
1428 Bedford lays siege to Orleans.
1429 Joan of Arc raises the siege of Orleans. Joan leads Charles VII to Rheims, where he is crowned. Henry VI is crowned at Westminster, and the protectorate comes to an end.
1430 Joan of Arc is captured by the Burgundians and sold to the English.
1431 Joan of Arc is burned at Rouen. Henry VI is crowned king of France at Paris by Cardinal Beaufort.
1435 The congress of Arras meets. The attempt to arrange a peace is unsuccessful. Bedford dies, and Richard, duke of York, becomes regent of France. The duke of Burgundy renounces his English alliance, and enters into a league with Charles VII.
1436 Paris is taken by the French. The French gradually extend their control in Normandy and Guienne.
1444 The earl of Suffolk arranges a truce with France.
1445 Henry marries Margaret of Anjou.
1447 The duke of Gloucester is charged with high treason, and dies in prison. Richard, duke of York, becomes heir-apparent.
1449 The French break the truce.
1450 The French capture Rouen. Normandy is lost to the English. Suffolk is impeached and murdered. The rebellion of Jack Cade is suppressed.
1451 The French capture Bordeaux and Bayonne. Calais is the only French possession remaining in English hands.
1452 The duke of York makes an ineffectual attempt to displace Somerset by force.
1453 Talbot, earl of Shrewsbury, leads an expedition to Gascony, but is defeated and slain at Castillon—the last battle of the Hundred Years' War. Somerset is imprisoned. Henry's mind gives way, and the duke of York is appointed protector.
1455 Henry recovers. York is dismissed and Somerset returns to power. The Wars of the Roses begin. York, Salisbury, and Warwick take up arms against Somerset, who is defeated and slain at St. Albans. Henry falls into the hands of the Yorkists.
1458 Henry brings about a brief reconciliation between the Yorkists and the Lancastrians.
1459 Civil war is renewed. The Yorkists are victorious at Blore Heath.
1460 The Yorkists under Warwick, Salisbury, and March defeat the Lancastrians at Northampton, and capture the king. The duke of York claims the throne, and is declared heir by parliament. Queen Margaret rouses the Lancastrians, who win the battle of Wakefield. The duke of York is killed. Salisbury is captured and executed.
1461 Edward, earl of March, York's son, defeats the Lancastrians at Mortimer's Cross. The queen defeats Warwick at the second battle of St. Albans and sets the king free. The earl of March is taken to London by Warwick, where he is proclaimed king as Edward IV. He pursues and defeats the Lancastrians at Towton, and is crowned at Westminster. Margaret flees to Scotland. Edward creates his brothers, George and Richard, dukes of Clarence and Gloucester.
1464 Queen Margaret appears in the north and civil war is renewed. She is defeated at Hedgeley Moor and Hexham. Edward marries Elizabeth Woodville.

1465 Henry, the late king, is captured and thrown into the Tower.
1469 Warwick, "the King-maker," becomes estranged from Edward because of favouritism shown the Woodvilles. Clarence marries Warwick's daughter. Uprisings fomented by Warwick occur in the northern counties under Robin of Redesdale. The queen's father and brother are captured and beheaded. Edward is held prisoner for a short time by Warwick.
1470 Clarence and Warwick, finding that Edward has proof of their treachery, flee to France. They are reconciled to Queen Margaret and plan the restoration of Henry VI. Warwick crosses to England, Edward flees to Flanders, and Henry is restored.
1471 Edward and Gloucester land in England. They are joined by Clarence and enter London. Edward defeats Warwick at Barnet. Warwick is killed. Edward defeats Margaret at Tewkesbury. The prince of Wales is slain. Death of Henry VI in the Tower.
1474 Edward leagues with Burgundy against France. Edward invades France, but is bought off by Louis XI.
1478 Clarence is charged with treason, and murdered in the Tower.
1483 Edward dies, and is succeeded by his son, Edward V, a boy of twelve. Richard, duke of Gloucester, becomes guardian. Gloucester overthrows the queen's relatives, and is acknowledged as protector. Gloucester orders the execution of Hastings, Rivers, and Grey. Edward V is deposed, and Gloucester is declared king by parliament. He is crowned as Richard III. Buckingham revolts, but is taken and executed. Edward V and his younger brother, Richard of York, are murdered in the Tower.
1484 Death of Richard's son, Edward, prince of Wales.

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MAP OF
ENGLAND
at the time of
THE NORMAN CONQUEST
Showing the Progress of
William's Arms
SCALE OF MILES
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80
1066
1068
1069-70
1072
1081.
SCOTLAND
NORTH SEA
IRISH SEA
ENGLISH CHANNEL
FRANCE
IRELAND
WALES
ENGLAND
Edinburgh
Berwick
Dunbar
Bothwell
Dumfries
GALLOWAY
Carlisle
CUMBERLAND
Hexham
Newcastle
R. Tyne
R. Wear
Durham
R. Tees
NORTHUMBERLAND
Otterburne
Ainwick
Bamborough
Dunstanburgh
Roxburgh
Selkirk
Hedgeley Moor
Halidon Hill
Lowther Hills
R. Tweed
R. Teviot
R. Clyde
R. Annan
R. Esk
R. Liddel
R. Irthing
WESTMORELAND
Scarborough
Stamford
York
Towton
R. Ouse
R. Aire
R. Derwent
Ravenspur
The Humber
LINDSEY
Pontefract
Doncaster
Lincoln
LINCOLN
Newark
Nottingham
Derby
DERBY
Stoke
STAFFORD
Chester
FLINT
Rhuddlan
CHESTER
ANGLESEY
CARNARVON
DENBIGH
Brandon
MERIONETH
Shrewsbury
SHROPSHIRE
MONTGOMERY
Montgomery
Ludlow
RADNOR
Wigmore
Mortimer's Cross
HEREFORD
Hereford
R. Wye
R. Severn
CARDIGAN
Cardigan
PEMBROKE
Haverford West
Milford Haven
CARMARTHEN
Carmarthen
Tenby
BRECKNOCK
Tewkesbury
Gloucester
MONMOUTH
Striguil
Berkeley
GLAMORGAN
Bristol
Bath
Malmesbury
Marlboro
Devizes
WILTS
Salisbury
Glarendon
SOMERSET
LUNDY I.
DEVON
Exeter
DORSET
Dorchester
Weymouth
Portland
CORNWALL
Plymouth
Leicester
Hosworth
Atherstone
Lutterworth
LEICESTER
RUTLAND
Mt. Sorrel
Coventry
Kenilworth
Warwick
WARWICK
Worcester
Evesham
Stratford
Woodstock
Oxford
OXFORD
Northampton
NORTHAMPTON
Bedford
BEDFORD
Fotheringay
HUNTINGDON
Ely
Cambridge
Royston
Buckingham
BUCKINGHAM
Wendover
Aylesbury
Thame
Wallingford
R. Thames
Reading
Windsor
Staines
HERTS
Ware
St. Albans
Waltham
Brentwood
London
MIDDLESEX
Kingston
Eltham
Rochester
Sevenoaks
SURREY
HANTS
Winchester
Southampton
Portsmouth
LOF WIGHT
SUSSEX
Arundel
Lewes
Senlac
Chichester
Pevensey
Hastings
Winchelsea
Romney
Dover
Sandwich
Canterbury
KENT
Leeds
ESSEX
Colchester
Harwich
SUFFOLK
Bury St. Edmunds
Ipswich
NORFOLK
Norwich
Lynn
Rising
The Wash
Longitude East 2° from Greenwich 0°

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